CREAT SERIAL By WILLIAM R. EYSTER Will Begin in NEXT WEEK'S LEDGER

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RUBY GORDON'S LOVE;

OR

THE MISTAKES OF A LIFE-TIME.

BY LIBBIE SPRAGUE PHILLIPS.

He was bringing with him a bride.

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CHAPTER I.

The dark shades of night had covered the trees and the flowers, and the road which led past Mrs. Gordon's little cottage was only just discernible through the deep, gloomy shadows; while beside a rustic gate which opened on to the roadway, stood a young girl on whose face the shades of sorrow were as heavy as were the shades which had darkened the face of Nature.

Never was statue more still. Her little hands were so tightly locked together that the nails were cutting into the delicate flesh; her lips were drawn and bloodless, her eyes were dry and burning, for no tears came to relieve the pent-up agony of her tortured brain.

Presently her ear caught the sound of carriage wheels coming slowly up the hill. It was for this that she was listening, and as the vehicle came in sight her face blanched to the hue of death and she leaned heavily against the gate post, while from her white lips broke a great, tearless sob.

It was a pitiful sight—that look of of frozen despair on the sweet face that should have been bright with happy smiles; for within that carriage was the man she loved; the man who had wooed and won her and whose wife she had promised to be. He was the adopted son of the rich and haughty old banker, Reuben Armytage, who lived in a lordly mansion farther up the hillside, but where the gleam of radiant lights from its many windows could be plainly seen from where the young girl stood, and the sound of glad and happy voices fell distinctly on her ears, for the servants were assembled on the brilliantly lighted lawn to welcome home their young master whom they dearly loved.

Ruby Gordon had known him ever since she could remember. They had been playmates in their childhood, their friendship gradually ripening into love as they grew older—love that was sternly opposed by the proud and aristocratic old banker who desired a wealthy and high-born wife for the boy of his adoption and whom he loved as a son.

But Lawrence Armytage had a will of his own, and despite the fact of his having been told that he would be disinherited if he wed with the girl of his choice, "a mere nobody," the old banker had sneeringly said, they became secretly engaged. And on the eve of his departure to a distant State where he was sent on a business transaction, he had stood beside her in the very place where she now stood alone and had promised undying love and faithfulness.

That was one year ago. Patiently, longingly had she waited for his return. The weary waiting was over at last; he was coming home; but alas for the faithful, trusting heart that had been given into his keeping, he was coming with him a bride!

What wonder that her face wore a deathly hue; what wonder that her heart gave one great throb and then stood still as the carriage went slowly past and she could see, seated by the side of the man she loved, the woman who had taken him from her.

No sound escaped from her. Silent and motionless she stood and watched them as they passed, caring not what he might think if he saw her standing there. The darkness was great, and she felt, rather than saw, that he leaned from the carriage and turned his head toward her, and she knew that her white dress had betrayed her presence. Then, to her surprise, there came to her ears the sound of her name as it fell from his lips in a despairing tone:

"Ruby!"

She had hoped that her love would die, that she might be able to tear his image from her heart when once she had seen him with his wife by his side, but that lowly spoken word with its ring of despair seemed to echo and re-echo through her ears, and, weak and trembling, she seated herself upon a garden seat, feeling that she should love him, and him only, until she died.

She began to feel that he, too, was suffering. It was not his love of wealth, as she had at first believed, that had parted them, but some deep, dark mystery. She began to feast her mind on memories of the old care-free, happy days, she recalled every adoring look, every endearing and sincerely spoken word of love. He had been in earnest then. He had loved her truly and well. What had come between them? What was the mystery of it all? That he had learned to love another better than herself she could not, would not, believe. Some treachery had parted them. What was it?

During the week which had elapsed since she first learned that he was to wed another, she had lived in a dazed, bewildered state, powerless to reason and to think. "Master Lawrence is to be married today and will start for home at once, bringing with him his bride," the servants at the great house on the hill had told her. And the suddenness of the unexpected news had nearly deprived her of her senses and she had lived since then as in a dream. Her mind was clearing now, and she began to realize that there was something mysterious about the suddenness of the step which he had taken.

Only one short month ago she had received a letter from him bidding her to be of good cheer, as he would soon be with her never to leave her again. In that letter he had renewed his vows of eternal faithfulness and love and had called her his waiting bride. Now another woman called him husband. What wonder that she felt that there was a mystery about it; that she asked herself, over and over again, what it meant!

A deafening cheer now broke upon her ears. Lawrence Armytage had reached his home and was receiving a royal welcome. "Welcome home. Welcome to Elmwood," came to her in distinct tones; and in fancy she could see the proud old man with a *look of happy relief in his eyes*, as he welcomed the woman who would now be to him a daughter; the woman who now made it impossible for her, the despised nobody, to ever fill that position.

What was Lawrence saying? she wondered. Was he looking with love-lit eyes into a beautiful face? Was he telling her that his love would make his home a heaven to her; or was he, with a look of hopeless misery on his face, thinking of her, the one who should have been his bride, deserted, forsaken and lone?

For she was alone—alone in her sorrow as she had been alone in her happiness and love. There was no kind father to avenge her wrongs, no loving mother to pity the stricken child, no brothers, no sisters with whom she might share her burdens of woe; even the woman with whom she lived was not a relative, although she had been taught to call her aunt.

She had dreamed of having a home of her own, a loving husband and many friends; it was over now, and oh! the bitterness of the awakening. Never again

would her lover's handsome face smile lovingly into her own; never again would she hear words of tenderest love from his lips. She had lost him forevermore. And as she began to realize what her life would be—lonely, solitary and wretched—she prayed that she might die and end it all.

While she sat there alone in the darkness of the moonless night, a far different scene was being enacted at Elmwood. The room of Lawrence Armytage, although the heart of one of the actors was beauty, if not quite as heavy as her own.

Lawrence presented his newly-wedded wife and received the congratulations of his friends and of his servants with a smiling face, but the old man who watched him closely knew that those smiles were forced and unnatural. He also detected an air of weariness and nervousness about him, and the triumphant look which at first rested on his own face gradually wore away to be replaced by a look of shrinking dread.

His heart was iron and his nerves were of steel, but there was something so pathetic about the pale, grave young girl was weeping in misery and despair. He knew it; and the thought but caused the relentless look within his eyes to deepen.

"Ah!" he muttered, "why should I now repent of what I have done? My plans have worked better than I had hoped; I shall no longer be troubled by the fear that Ruby Gordon will one day reign over my home. I have conquered—aye, conquered!" he repeated defiantly, as he addressing some imaginary being, for he had extended his hand toward the window and his face flushed with a wild, defiant look. "You may go back to the grave, Hortense Wilburton," he continued. "for I have defied your spirit!" I sent you from my home for all time; you shall never come back to it, even though you have returned from the spirit world for that purpose!"

After having uttered these mysterious words, he dropped into a chair and placed his hands over his eyes as though he would shut out from his troubled mind some haunting vision.

Presently he went back to the window and drew the blinds, again muttering: "Return, that Ruby Gordon! Her eyes seem to haunt me! They always have, but she can never come here as mistress now; that is settled. I am not sorry for what I have done. Death would be preferable a thousand fold with those black and seemingly searching eyes continually upon me, and with the thought that she could die as did the woman who darkened and embittered my life! Lawrence would have forget her and be happy with the one whom he has wed."

CHAPTER II.

"I should like to talk with you for a few moments in the library," Lawrence said to his father the next morning as they rose from the breakfast table. And the tone of suppressed emotion in which the words were uttered revealed to the old man's mind what the subject of conversation was to be. But he had nerved himself for the ordeal and not by word or sign did he betray that he shrank from the interview.

"It is a lovely morning, Lawrence," he said, as he threw open the window and leisurely contemplated the beautiful scene without with the air of one at peace with all the world.

Had a heart, Lawrence wondered, as he watched him for a moment in silence.

"Father," he said at length, as he drew from his pocket a folded paper and, opening it, spread it on the table before him, then pointing to a marked paragraph, continued: "Who published this account of Ruby Gordon's marriage to Leslie Neil?"

"The editor, I suppose," he answered in a tone that was meant to impress upon the young man's mind that it was a matter of indifference to him. Then, as Lawrence did not answer and he knew that he was regarding him with a searching look, he raised his eyes to his face inquiringly.

"Why? Have you already found out that it was a mistake?"

"Already! Yes, the knowledge of your treachery has been revealed to me already; but the revelation came too late to prevent me from making a fool of myself. Great God! it might have been worse than it is, he added in a low tone, as though he would take possession of his mind, and during that time I was as one crazed. I was powerless to reason. But one thought stood out clearly in my mind, never give Ruby Darrell the chance to triumph over me, and as I was aware of the fact that Rosina Vincent had for a long time been secretly in love with me, I resolved to act at once. Ruby Darrell had sworn that Ruby should be his wife, and I believed that during my absence he had by means known only to my heart against me. I never dreamed of the truth until after my marriage sent me a telegram, so timed that it would reach me the very next day saying that the notice of his marriage with Ruby had been a mistake. Curse him! and—— Well, it was your hand that signaled to me a cup of the damnable lie. You plotted together, you two. How could you have been so cruel? You have wrecked the happiness of three lives. Your treachery and perfidy has placed a barrier between me and the woman I love, a barrier that no hand can break, that no law can put aside. We are hopelessly divided, yet we must live our lives here where we may meet every day, every moment, but making us realize more bitterly the awful misery of it all! It is more than mortal can endure!"

There was despair in his face and voice—despair so deep and hopeless that Reuben Armytage knew not what to say. His eyes were kept steadily fixed on the scene without, and after a pause of several minutes Lawrence spoke again:

"You were always stern and hard. You have always hated Ruby Gordon. Tell me why."

The old man turned from the window now. On his face was a look Lawrence had never seen there before; an expression of utter wretchedness and woe.

"My boy," he said, and his usually calm and steady voice sounded faint and husky, "if I were to tell you why I hate that girl, you would think me a fool; and I own that the reason is both ridiculous and absurd. She haunts me. The sound of her voice always seems to me like an echo from the long dead past, the sight of her face always makes me feel that a ghostly presence is near me. She is so very like one whom I knew in its long ago—one who was both the joy and the curse of my life. Eighteen years has she been sleeping 'neath the cloth of the valley, but I believe that her spirit came back in the person of Ruby Gordon—came back to haunt me and to avenge her death.

"No, I did not kill her," he resumed, as he noted the look of horror that suddenly sprang to Lawrence's eyes. "I did not kill her, but I have always felt that I was to blame for the sudden ending of her life. Ah! I was to blame; I know it—to blame for the death of my wife—my wife! Lawrence, do you understand? Ah! my boy, I once had a happy home, a wife and a little child—a little child whose life also went out with the life of its mother. Heavens! how I loved my baby!"

He leaned back in his chair and brushed the hair from his brow with a gesture of weariness.

"I never knew this," said Lawrence, in a sympathetic tone, forgetting, for a moment, his own woes in witnessing the evidently deep anguish of the man whose sins had been so many.

"Ah, Lawrence, no one here in this place knows me for what I am, a wretched, broken-hearted, heartless villain, for that my life has indeed been a haunted life. I have never told the story—I never thought to tell it; but I will tell it to you. You may think that in your heart you I was going to say forgive me for what I have done to separate you and Ruby Gordon; but that is more than I have a right to expect. You may sympathize with me and pity me, though, and you will never give Ruby Darrell the chance to triumph over me, and as I was aware of the fact that Rosina Vincent had for a long time been secretly in love with me, I resolved to act at once. Ruby Darrell had sworn that Ruby should be his wife, and I believed that during my absence he had by means known only to my heart against me. I never dreamed of the truth until after my marriage sent me a telegram, so timed that it would reach me the very next day saying that the notice of his marriage with Ruby had been a mistake. Curse him! and—— Well, it was your hand that signaled to me a cup of the damnable lie. You plotted together, you two. How could you have been so cruel? You have wrecked the happiness of three lives. Your treachery and perfidy has placed a barrier between me and the woman I love, a barrier that no hand can break, that no law can put aside. We are hopelessly divided, yet we must live our lives here where we may meet every day, every moment, but making us realize more bitterly the awful misery of it all! It is more than mortal can endure!"

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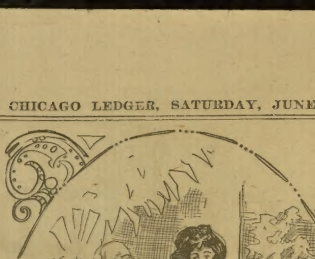

He—So you believe in the universal brotherhood of man.

She—Yes; I promised to be a sister to twenty-two men last summer and am going to try to beat my record this year.

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Lawrence made no answer. That the man whom he had been taught to call father had once had a wife he had always known; but he had never heard the story of when and how she died, nor had she ever been told that there had been a child, and he listened with breathless interest as the old man resumed:

"I was thirty-six when I first met Hortense Wilburton; old enough to understand what love is. She took possession of my whole heart. Perhaps had I loved her less I might have been more merciful, but she came to New Haven, my boyhood's home, to be a governess in one of the wealthy families there, and I had known her but six weeks when I asked her to be my wife. She was an orphan and very poor, and a home such as I was able to offer her was not to be refused.

"But I felt at the time that she returned my love, and for a while I lived in a fool's paradise. We went much in society, and I was proud of the admiration bestowed upon my wife. She accepted it as though it were hers by right, as though she had been born for the sole purpose of being petted, admired and loved by everybody.

"But I felt that I alone had the right to love her, and after a while a jealous feeling began to creep into my heart. I fancied that she listened willingly to the flattering words of other men, that she accepted their attentions in preference to mine; consequently, I grew tired of social gaieties and took to staying at home more. She did not complain at this, but she grew listless and pale, and I felt that she regarded her palatial home as a sort of prison from which she longed to flee.

"Soon after this our child was born. That she would be happy now, I firmly believed. And for a while she was; baby filled her heart. Those were the happiest days I have ever known. Watching my beautiful wife, with a look of sweet contentment on her face, bending lovingly over the little dimpled form of our child closely clasped within her arms, I felt that I should be able to win her whole heart now; and when sometimes she would raise her starry eyes to my face with a look of holy joy within their liquid depths, I began to feel that at last she was all my own."

Here the old man paused. An absent look stole over his face and he seemed to be living over again those blissful days. A long drawn sigh at length escaped his lips, and he continued:

"Alas, for my short-lived hopes! The social season opened again and invitations were showered upon me. We were occasionally, but I felt that baby ought not to be left so much with the nurse, and I said so for it, and I could not understand why she did not echo my words. It was not long after this that we had our first quarrel. She called me pradish and old fashioned. "Other mothers left their children," she said, and she saw no reason for thinking that baby would not be safe with the nurse. So, although my heart yearned for the quiet joys which might be ours, she craved so for the social world that I allowed myself to be drawn into an endless round of gaieties.

"There were times when I felt that which we lived a man whom she had known before her marriage, and his marked attentions to her were apparent to all. Soon it began to be whispered about that they had been sweethearts in the past, that she loved him yet, and had married me only for the position and wealth I could give her as a husband.

"I never questioned her in regard to this; but the cruel words cut my heart like a dagger, and I resolved that we would go home [illegible] they should not meet so often. So when we returned we took rooms at the next hell I refused to go. For an hour I paced the floor, battling with the fiend of my heart. I was too proud to own that I was jealous, and I forbade her doing any such thing.

"We had a stormy scene. Her pride equaled mine. She was not one to be driven. I have often wondered since if it would have been better to have been less dignified and commanding and to have pleaded with her instead of doing as I did, telling her that if she defied me and went she should not come back to my home, that she should never more be wife of mine.

"A dark look came over her face as I uttered these words, and her eyes flashed with anger and pride. She made no reply, but began at once to make ready for the ball.

"I went to the library, closed the door and sat down by the fire, alone with my saddened thoughts. I heard one of the servants leave the house, and the thought came to me that she had sent her to tell the Elmwoods, our nearest neighbors, to call for her as they went. The hope to which I had desperately clung that she would, after her anger had spent itself, comply with my wishes, died now. She was really going to defy me despite all that I had said. A bitter thought came to me that it was on account of her old lover that she was doing this; she could not deny herself the pleasure of his society. And going to the room where she sat awaiting the carriage I told her so.

"This night you are to choose between us," I said. "I have warned you night after night, leaning on that fellow's arm, listening with willing ears to the flattering words which have fallen from his lips; and I have, with an aching heart, heard many sneering remarks in regard to your actions, for your devotion to such other has attracted the attention of all. I have borne it all in silence, thinking that my great love would, in time, win from you your folly. I can bear it no longer, however; if you choose his society tonight in preference to mine, you make the choice for all time. Remember this."

"She one word did she say, but turning from me she wrapped a fleecy robe around her, for the carriage was in waiting at the door, and with all the dignity of an offended queen, she swept past me and was gone.

"What I suffered during the hours which followed I cannot tell. My heart was broken as also was my home. She had made her choice, and henceforth we were come back to me. But the thought made me dizzy with grief and pain. I went to the nursery and clasped my baby in my arms and held it for hours, thanking God that it was too young to know of the wrong her own mother did.

"When I again drew near for her return, I went back to the library. My anger and despair had increased with every hour of her absence, and my heart was more cruel than it was as one crazed.

"You are making a mistake," I said, as I met her in the hall, 'if you think for a moment that I did not mean what I said. My roof shall shelter you no more, even tonight. You made your choice; abide by it.'

"She regarded me for a moment with a look which I then was unable to read in silence and ascend the stairs, but I caught her by the arm and drew her back and silently pointed to the door.

"'Do you really mean it?' she cried. 'Would you really turn from your home at this hour of the night? Are you crazy?'

"'I am,' I replied. 'Your cruelty has made me wild. I care not what happens now. You have ruined my life, now go!' And again I pointed to the door.

"Never shall I forget the look that came over her face, a smiling, wistful, pleading look which gradually gave place to a terrified expression. It has haunted me all these years; it will haunt me till I die. And I shrink with horror from the thought that with that same hated expression on her beautiful face she will meet me on the other shore.

"I think that had she asked my forgiveness at that moment I should have taken her back to my heart and made her my wife; but she did not. Laying her little white hand on the door-knob she said:

"'Then I will go, but you shall remember: My life shall be spent in avenging the wrong you do me this night; should death overtake me I will return and haunt you all your life!' And with these words she was gone.

"I believe that at that moment insanity entered into my soul. I have a faint recollection of going to my room and of locking the door. How I passed the night I do not know. With the coming of day I left town there came to me a thought of my little child.

"I went at once to the nursery and was much surprised when the nurse told me that Mrs. Armytage had taken the baby to sleep with her. Then she had come back, dismissed the nurse, and they had gained admittance. She had thought that we, Mr. Armytage, could not know whether I was at that moment glad or sorry.

"I went to her room wondering what I was to say to her; but it was empty. Bureau drawers standing open; boxes and drawers had hastily been emptied of their contents, and I began to realize then that she had surely gone and taken baby with her.

"A long more bitter than death now pierced my heart. Had she but left me my child I would have cared little for all else; nothing to live for and it was with difficulty that I restrained from ending my existence.

"I decided that there should be no scandal. Unfortunately with their departure I informed the servants that their mistress had been called away on a matter of business; then I closed and locked the rooms which she had occupied, and never entered them again.

"The days and nights were all alike to me now. A dreary routine existed, one day ended or when a morning dawned, so great was the longing and despair.

"At length I felt that I must find my child and bring it back, but I had not yet formed my plans as to how it was to be done when I read an account of a terrible steamboat explosion, and among the names of those drowned were those of my wife and child.

"This ended all. The beautiful home of which I had been so proud grew hateful to me now. There was no one to occupy it after my life was ended, no one to inherit my wealth; its gorgeous splendors seemed to mock at my wretchedness, so one day I sold it and came here to live, a solitary, broken-hearted man, aged before my time and with no aim nor purpose in life.

"Four years went by—four lonely, uneventful years; then one day a curious thing happened. A messenger boy from the village brought to my door one stormy night, a little girl of about four or five years of

age. She had come all alone on the train, from where, no one knew; neither could any one make out who she was or where she wanted to go; she also said that mamma had gone to Heaven and had sent her to live with some one here. Her mother had given her a letter which would have explained all, but she had lost it, and the conductor in whose care she had been placed had been accidentally lifted before the little thing had reached the end of her journey.

"All this she told in a lisping, baby fashion, but she could not remember the name of the place to where she had been sent. The names of nearly all the village people were then repeated to her, but she silently shook her head until my name was mentioned, then she said: 'Yes, that is the name mamma said,' So she was brought to me.

"Of course the child was mistaken, as there was no one among my friends or acquaintances who would send to me a little child.

"For a moment my heart yearned toward the friendless baby; but, advancing to my side, she raised her eyes to my face and the look she sent upon me struck terror to my soul. It was the same wistful, pleading look that had rested on my wife's face when I last saw it. Those eyes were just like hers. Oh, my God! how very like they were! And the thought flashed through my brain at once that my lost wife's soul was gazing at me from that baby face. Her last words rang in my ears: 'If death overtakes me I will come back and haunt you all—your life.' Great God! she had come back! How I shook from the touch of those baby fingers as they twined around my own! for the child had grasped my hand as it lay speechless from my knee. 'Take her away!' I cried. 'For God's sake, take her away!' Then as the child shrank back frightened and trembling I explained to those who were present that I had once lost a little child whom I had dearly loved, and the sight of this one unnerved me.

"Lawrence, you will now understand why I cannot endure the presence of Ruby Gordon, for it was she who was the friendless child. Mrs. Gordon was visiting my housekeeper at the time this occurred, and she it was who adopted her.

"The thought that my wife's spirit had returned in the form of this child took complete possession of my mind, and the thought has grown and strengthened with every year since then. Every day she grows to look more like her; every time I hear the sound of her voice I feel that it comes to me from the spirit world, and, Lawrence, unreasonable fear comes over me. I imagine what my life would be were she to come here to live. I could not bear it, Lawrence; indeed I could not! I have done a cruel, wicked thing, Lawrence, and you will never forgive me, but some time, my boy—some time when your heart is heavy and sad—think how very hard it was, and remorse my own must be, and pity and bear with me if you can."

He leaned his head against the back of the chair as he ceased speaking, and closed his eyes. Lawrence, watching him, saw the tears steal over his wrinkled cheeks and there did seem to be in the old heart a certain sort of pity for the man whose life had been, by cruel circumstances, robbed of every joy, and whose insane delusions kept peace and comfort from his soul.

But he did not tell him so. He had been deeply wronged and his heart was full of bitterness. He thought the deluded old man would not right the wrong that had been done, and, crushing back the bitter words he meant to have said, he rose from his chair and, without even a word, left the room.

CHAPTER III.

Lawrence, himself, nearly went mad in the days that followed. Sometimes he felt that it would be a relief to become actually insane and so forget the unhappy situation in which he was now placed.

His first act after the interview with his father was to write to Ruby Gordon and explain everything to her. He felt that he must do this. He must let her know why he had put another woman in her place. But as he finished his letter he felt how weak and miserable was his excuse, after all. She would despise him for his lack of faith, and he cursed himself, as he had done many times during the last week, for the rash act he committed.

After the letter was sent he sought his wife. She, too, must know the true state of affairs. Lawrence Armytage was not one who believed in secrets. He was to marry their cousin, and tell all about his love for Ruby. But, believing, as they did, that Ruby had been killed by the train and wedded to another, she felt that she might win his love in time, and her love for him had been so great that unhesitatingly she had become his wife. Now he must tell her that their cruel marriage could be undone, a fake, that his old love was still unwed, that she still lived here near his old home where they must necessarily see each other often.

He never forgot the look that came over his wife's face as he told her—such a look of hopeless misery that his heart was at once filled with a great pity for the poor girl who had, as he knew, cherished such fond hopes of winning his love herself.

Tears sprang to her eyes, and as she turned her head aside that he might not see them, a smothered sob broke from her lips. She must also suffer bitterly. His heart was sore for her before, and this added to his grief. It all seemed so terrible.

Presently she turned her head and met the pitying look from his eyes. It was not pity that she wanted; it was love, and there was no hope of winning it now. If Ruby Gordon had been faithless he would never forget her; he would but love her more for the awful wrong that he had done her. She had dreamed such a beautiful dream, but it was over. She was fully awakened to the knowledge that her husband's love would never be hers—never! And in that moment the whole nature of Bessie Armytage underwent a change.

Fierce rebellion entered her soul, and into the heart of this girl, who had hitherto cherished only the tenderest of thoughts, there crept a feeling that she would like to kill this Ruby Gordon if she dared.

"You will never care for me now," she said, in a tremulous tone. "You will learn to hate and despise me. Oh, Lawrence, what a mistake we made!" Then, turning suddenly, she laid both little white hands upon his shoulder: "Tell me," she said, "if this girl whom you have always loved, had really been false to you, if she had given her love readily wedded to another, would you have ever learned to care for me?"

Lawrence groaned.

"I do care for you, Bessie, in a way, but not as I did her. I love her with all the love I asked you to be my wife. If she had been false— Yes, I might have learned to love you; I cannot tell. But it is I who was the faithless one. Oh, Bessie, pity me! See how weak I am—how helpless! I have wronged you both and there is no way in which I can right that wrong. What must I do—what can I do?"

A strange look of bitterness crossed Bessie's fair, white face.

"There is the divorce court," she answered. "You might—"

"Don't," he interrupted. "I do not believe in divorces. We are married; nothing can alter that fact, and we must make up our minds to make the best of it. We are all three placed in a cruel position, but it seems to me that poor Ruby will suffer the more keenly. What a lonely life! I was a fool, a—"

Here he stopped and began to walk back and forth across the floor, his head bent as though thinking deeply.

That he was suffering more over the sorrows of the woman he loved that over the sorrows of his own wife was only natural; but it was also natural that a feeling of resentment should enter into my wife's heart, and as she witnessed his show of grief. "He thinks only of her sufferings," she thought bitterly, "and I—I am to be pitied!"

Lawrence continued promptly, "by letter," he added as his wife raised her white face suddenly to his, "for I do not feel that I can trust myself to see her; I never intend to go. You, Bessie, as my wife, will understand me in time this occurred, I shall not forget that; besides, an interview with her would only result in doing something that neither of us could endure. As I have said, I have explained everything to her, and yourself; but Leslie Darrell, the scoundrel who, with my deluded old mother, planned the villainous scheme, remains to be dealt with."

And now a dark, threatening look came into Lawrence's eyes as he uttered the name of Leslie Darrell, and Bessie felt that her heart suddenly fill with a wild, vague fear.

She forgot, for a moment, the despair and resentment that had entered her soul, and remembered only that Lawrence's only husband was to her although he loved her not.

"What will you say to him?" she asked, as she gazed at him wistfully. "Oh, Lawrence, what will you do? Will there be a quarrel between you, for—for—"

She paused, and Lawrence felt that the hand which was resting upon his arm was trembling, and knew that she feared for his safety.

"Do not be alarmed," he said. "The days of duels are past, but I own that I should like to have it out with him, even though the death and I were killed you would then be freed from the life that must become a painful enough to you now. Should you grieve, Bessie, if this should happen?"

He hardly knew why he had asked the question, and he was not prepared for the hurried reply that was his answer.

"Yes," she replied, between her sobs, "I should. Oh, Lawrence, you never know how much I love you! Such love as mine is the love that makes of a woman either a devil or an angel. I care not how it will end with me if I do not know. I feel at this moment that I would kill you if you were taken from me. We cannot live our whole lives in this way, Lawrence—simply for duty's sake. I could do not feel that I can give you up. I was willing to become your wife knowing that you did not love me, and I think—yes, I am willing to remain your wife knowing you do not love me, for I love you. To live in your home, to be with you every day, although you are cold and stern, you will be better than to be shut out from your life forever. I could not, Lawrence, I would kill me. I do not trust me off, Lawrence; as you have said, we are married—nothing can undo that. Let us try to endure our lives. Perhaps peace and contentment may come to us by and by."

There was something so pitiful about it all that Lawrence was deeply moved. He folded her in his arms and kissed the white, sorrowful face.

"Then you do not wish for a divorce?" he asked. "You would rather try your life with me?"

"I would. But tell me, Lawrence, if it were possible for you to obtain a divorce from me, would you marry Ruby Gordon?"

"No. As I told you before, I do not believe in divorces. You are my wife, and will be till you die."

Bessie gave a little start and raised her eyes to his face with an appealing look.

"Will I die?" she repeated. "I had not thought of that. Tell me," and again she clung to him, "will you love me, Lawrence, very much that I would die, will you? Anything but that! Oh, Lawrence, anything but that!"

The sweet voice was full of tender sadness; the blue eyes were misty with anshed tears; the little white hands clung to him in a beseeching way, and Lawrence drew her close to his side he replied, in a voice that rang with deep earnestness:

"No, Bessie, God forbid that such a cruel, wicked thought should ever enter my mind. I shall never wish that you would die; but for your own sake as well as mine and Ruby's, I wish we had both been more sensible. We were very foolish to marry as we did. But we understand each other perfectly, and we will do the best we can to make each other"—he paused; "happy" seemed to be such a senseless word in this case—"contented," he said, and even this word was spoken in a hesitating way.

"I have kept nothing from you," he continued. "I have told you everything. If I am moody and silent at times, you will understand. Be merciful and bear with me if you can. Oh, Bessie! I loved her so well that I plunged into so cruelly—spoiled her whole life—and remorse will eat at my heart day and night while I live."

Every word that he uttered cut deeper and deeper into the heart of the hapless girl who listened, and she realized more and more how vain it would be to hope that his love would ever be hers.

After Lawrence had left her she sat there in the morning room after their conversation had taken place, and gazed for hours from the window at the beautiful world that lay before her.

Elmwood was the most beautiful place that she had ever seen. It was a massive old building of gray stone, surrounded by a well-kept lawn which was shaded by tall elms and brightened here and there by blooming flower and sparkling fountains.

She was mistress of all this comfort and beauty, she told herself, as she tried to make herself believe that she should enjoy her life, loveless though it would be. There was a handsome carriage and a pair of splendid horses at her command; an army of servants, everything that the cold desire, excepting the love of the man whose wife she had become.

She had had a hard life. Her father was a country doctor with only a small practice, and she, the eldest of a large family, had known nothing but privation and cares all her life.

No wonder that she was dazzled by the luxuries with which she was now surrounded; no wonder she was different from anything she had ever known before. And as she calmly thought the matter over, she concluded that to be mistress of this palatial house was a position not to be despised; and she decided that she would try to be content and to enjoy all these comforts and luxuries which had fallen to her lot, although they had not been bestowed upon her by the lovely, loving and pitiful little sigh as she did so.

Be it said to this way that the wife of Lawrence Armytage began her new life at Elmwood. Outwardly, Lawrence was a model husband. He was courteous, always kind, but no love, no tenderness, ever crept into his eyes or voice. Bessie had made up her mind to expect nothing but courteous attention, so her face usually wore a contented look; and if ever a woman tried with all her heart and soul to be happy, Bessie Armytage was that woman. And if she occasionally rose from a pillow that was damp with the midnight tears, Lawrence never knew it, as she never complained, fretted because of her loneliness.

Old Reuben Armytage lifted her. He looked much younger than he did before she came. He held his gray head erect and there was a flash in his eyes and a tone in his voice that no one had known for years. Lawrence noted this, and knew that the change in the old man was due to the fact that he was no longer haunted by the spectre that the girl whom he hated so unreasonably would some day be mistress at Elmwood.

Ah, no! Never would sweet Ruby Gordon bring grace to the dear old home. This thought was ever in the mind of Lawrence Armytage. It was he who now lived in the past, who was haunted by a vision of "what might have been."

In the issue of the Ledger for next week the reader will find the continuation of this great story of passion and misfortune, involving some highly dramatic situations. Every subscriber should read our announcement of free premiums on pages thirteen and fifteen.

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A Scarce Article.

"What is an optimist, papa?"

"An optimist is a man who is married and contented with his lot."

THE CURSE OF THE GEISHA GIRL;

OR

FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION.

BY CONSTANCE BEATRICE WILLARD.

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CHAPTER V.

"Her heart as yet untouched by the song of love."

"Lilly, I love you, darling, indeed I do. Don't shrink away from me, sweetheart. Say whole fibred Jack, and admiring the answer."

"Vin, dear brother, I love you, too, but only as I would a kind, gentle elder brother."

"You are cruel, my darling, you are cruel," and the young man's voice broke with a sob.

Vincent and Lilly were sitting in the great public gardens, watching the curious people about them, and admiring the exquisite scenery, when Vincent had suddenly caught her hand in his and poured out the love which was swelling in his heart.

The young girl looked wonderingly at him, her dark eyes wide open. Was this man, with flushed, ardent face, trembling, imploring words, and anguished expression, her foster-brother Vin, whom she had loved and she had loved for ten years?

"I do not understand, dear, I do not understand," she said gently.

Vincent sprang to his feet and stood before her, his eyes of deep blue flashing, and he said with a sternness which frightened her.

"You are a woman now, Lilly. For the past month you have been playing havoc with the hearts of all the fellows in Hongkong. At the theater, the races, riding in your chair or at dinner, you have been a regular queen, and we men lying about like bowled-over ten pins. I can't stand it, I have always thought of marrying you. When I studied at college, when I took my law degree, I thought of you as sharing my love, although I never realized how dear you were until that man stepped in between us."

Slowly the color died from her cheeks as he raged, but as he concluded she asked with a curious tone in her voice:

"What man?"

"Vambrace, of course. Lilly, take warning from me, and keep clear of it in all ways. That man is too old, too worn for you. He was having love affairs when you were a baby. I love you, my darling. I love you!" and he stretched out his arms to her, regardless of the interest displayed in the case by a little party then passing consisting of a Chinese lady who was carried pick-a-back on account of her small feet which prevented her from walking, her husband, a coolie who walked behind waving a great fan.

Lillian's eyes looked away to the great Peak. They rested on the signal station, but a little blot on the great surface of the mountain, and remembered the day when they had visited it, and Vambrace had caught her when she stumbled and thought she was going down into depthless space. She could still feel the firm grasp of his arm and see the expression which flashed for a moment in his eyes. At the time she had scarcely noticed these things, but now they came back to her.

"You won't ruin my life, will you, Lilly?" came out of the surrounding atmosphere, and she roused herself with an effort to start talking.

"No one can ruin another's life," she said, half scornfully.

"You can ruin my life if you refuse," and the anguish in the voice caused her to withdraw her eyes from the signal station and turn upon her companion.

Many women, especially during this trip, found him good to look at, the clear-cut faced young man, whose broad, white brow and clean-cut face suggested the professional man of the most intellect. Not that in either Vambrace or Alex, he was well built, and a certain uprightness of living showed in every expression. This might develop into austerity as he grew older, or broaden into a wholesomeness of being, were his talents and warm-heartedness directed into the right channel.

Many had found him good to look at, and several had sighed in vain for some expression of admiration, but Lilly was not among them. Partly did she love him, but as the child, not the woman, and so she endeavored to tell him.

"You may be a man, Vin, with your twenty-three years, but we are little girls yet, and I cannot think of you except as my but my playmate. Please forget you said anything, won't you, dear, and be my darling brother?" holding out two pretty little hands.

She was nothing but a child, Vincent thought with relief, and so he clasped the little hands a more experienced man would have kissed, he tried to think he was content, and took her to rejoin the others, and the party took a launch and had a delightful tea on the water, barely returning in time for 8 o'clock dinner. That evening Lillian and Rose both sang in their private apartments, although no outsiders were present—not even the dangerously fascinating Englishman, for just about the time the twelve years singing bird was whitewinged angels to Mrs. Humphries' accompaniment, a tall figure, closely wrapped in spite of an oppressive heat, in an Inverness, hurried along Wellington street in the Chinese quarter of the town, until he came to a filthy doorway, entered it, and a moment later was talking earnestly with a woman, lying upon a couch, upon a black robe embroidered with crimson serpents.

"Now, once for all, I tell you I am willing to give you whatever money you wish, but you must not bother me in any way whatsoever, or I will have to speak to the authorities about you."

The woman looked up at him, and a hideous expression crossed her face.

"The wrongs of a deserted one cannot be healed with money."

"I know that, my poor girl. I know that; but I want to make you comfortable, hungry, if I can."

"Happy? Happy? Dear Buddha, hear him! Me happy!" rising and standing before him.

She was taller than the ordinary women of Japan, and a certain dignity contained in the dim light. "Me happy? Can any money restore my place as the man's loved and trusted and adored? Can money restore the child which my worrying over his unworthy self caused to be stricken dead in the early youth, my beauty, my trust?"

"The man holds out with real sorrow in his eyes. "No," he said sadly. "Nothing can do that, but a little money will ease things for you."

The woman flung out her arm, and her eyes glowed like coals of fire.

"Do you think I am a woman to be bought with money? I am the injured wife, betrayer seal my mouth, or lift the curse from off your head? Accursed you are and accursed you shall be, and so shall it be ended. Those who mate with you must suffer, even unto the last generation, by your hands. As you shrink from the sound of the thunder, when the lightning flashes the touch of the raindrops, so shall your sons after you, not only here, but their spirits will hear the curse on into other bodies, for such a curse is never ending."

The woman ceased, leaning up against the wall, a bloody foam flecking her lips, and the man said more than angrily.

"You force me to take distasteful steps to protect myself. If you are found here, or if you attempt to leave Kowloon, into Hongkong, the police will seize you. Do you understand?"

"I understand: but the curse remains forever and forever," with this ringing in his ears, Quinton Vambrace left the house of the street, heedless of robbers, muttering to himself.

"The old Hebrew curse twisted about a little Japanese girl's head, and descending on the children until the third and fourth generation, but she is still more liberal—forever and forever."

CHAPTER VI.

"Love is a plant that grows more rapidly than any other, in the garden of emotions."

It was a month since the little party in which we have introduced ourselves to our-to-be-forgotten bill, when one morning all were startled by the appearance of Quinton Vambrace, which is located at a high altitude on the peak, and is considered one of the sights of this most entertaining and cosmopolitan of cities.

The two sweet young sisters, with the exception of Vincent, had created quite roses upon their cheeks, never looked happier or gayer, and both attracted considerable attention from the other guests of King Edward's Hotel. Several jealous mammas, seeing Quinton Vambrace in attentive attendance upon them together about the boldness of those American girls, but as the two were beauties, it seemed possible to detect a flaw in either appearance or manner of the sisters, who were at all times very modest and delightful in every way. Still, in any foreign place, although one may meet with more liberal criticism than those of any other nationality. Lilly and Rose were quite unconscious, however, and laughed gaily at their sensations of being drawn in the native conveyances that seemed so fascinating to them. Rose was particularly merry, and said in a low voice to her sister while Vincent was pretty close to her:

"Lilly, you are safe to my coolie," and then said with a pretty assumption of dignity: "How, you go allee same chop chop—save?"

"Yes, madam, I will improve my gait," was the undaunted answer, and the speed became so great that the little American girl nearly fell out of her vehicle and carried beyond the peals of laughter in which her attempt at pigeon English had been met issuing from Alex.

Rosebud possessed one excellent characteristic—she always knew when to laugh at herself, and when he caught up with her she said gaily in French:

"The laugh is on me this time. I do hope that he does not understand that, too," and Alex returned in the same language:

"Watch out, my Rosie, or he'll understand my love-making," at which impudent remark Miss Rosie turned up her pretty little nose, and, forgetting herself, said in English:

"Donkey!" and he only laughed. Really, Master Anxiety was growing up rapidly.

When the great reservoir was reached, the party was inordinately hungry, and after the scenery had been admired, and the engineering which perfected this system of waterworks praised, it enjoyed the excellent lunch which Mr. Vambrace provided. There were cold roast chicken, salads of various kinds, water cress, potted hare, cold roast lamb which had come from Australia, appetizingly cooked in some curious Oriental way; ham, which had been boiled, then skinned, covered with a mixture of egg, cracker dust and curry, and carefully baked; fruits of almost every kind; sweetmeats, and most excellent wine. All of this lunch had been carried upon the backs of several coolies, while four waiters from the hotel accompanied the party in chairs and attended to their wants.

"Are you enjoying yourself, Lilly?" asked Vin somewhat gloomily, looking into the fierce, imploring face of the girl.

"Why, of course I am," she answered, somewhat startled at the question.

"And yet, think of those wretches we saw riding through the town, this spread would have fed—well, the rest of it."

Lilly's gentle eyes flashed as she said, indignantly:

"Vin, that is scarcely in good taste. You are Mr. Vambrace's guest."

"I know it, but I hate to see money wasted."

"What's wasted?" asked Mr. Churchton, cheerily. "Don't you know that some of our best writers, political philosophers and economists, claim that nothing is ever wasted? Do you run counter to them?"

Vincent's face flushed, and he said, tossing back his light hair from his brow:

"I cannot help being impressed with the cruel poverty of this place, and I was speaking of it to Miss Lilly."

A slight smile played about Vambrace's lips, as he quickly interposed:

"The trouble with you, but it is bad everywhere. There will always be Lazarus and Dives until the end of time, I suppose."

"This trip has taught me many things in life," Vincent answered absent-mindedly, and he did not seem to be hurt when his companion changed the subject. Later, however, Rose called him aside and said rather testily for him:

"I wish you would refrain from these absurd remarks. You are behaving more like a donkey of yourself, go out in a field and get it over. Everyone none of our friends see you."

"Its trying to help my fellow creatures being a donkey?"

"Certainly not; we all try to do that a little, but you are a regular old philosopher now we do it. Rich men have certain obligations laid upon them, it is their duty to spend plenty of money. I do not believe in saving money away too freely. Get it you must, of course, but I do not give one cent toward charitable institutions. I give a certain amount every year in order to permit people to earn an honest living."

"Oh, but, uncle, why make them wait so long? If you have the money, why not spend those all at my wish? Then you will give a few minutes of happiness to those who suffer, I will be glad."

The kindly-faced man looked at the young fellow for a minute with a curious expression, and then he threw a hand on either shoulder, he said earnestly:

"Vin, shake the dust out of your head, my boy, that it is only the poor that suffer. About the least miserable several heartsick suffering can relieve the hunger, which is terrible, but which is infinitely more endurable and worse than death. An empty heart is like an empty pocketbook, both, but I hope you may never learn that by experience. Try to develop some personalities to yourself for it is not good for one to confide them to a mixed crowd. Cultivate a little poise like a gentleman, and above all, be quiet. A regular, thorough gentleman in all that the term expresses."

"Thank you, I do not care to pass through the adventures he has had to gain that knowledge," was the haughty answer, and Vincent dashed off and, meeting Mrs. Humphries, was soon laughing and fears into her ears until the party started home.

Alex Lillian's coolie was picking his way down a steep incline, stumped against a woman, throwing her down and tramping over her before the horrified girl could stop him, and when the others joined her, in a few words, they found her in her dainty pale blue organdie in the dust of the road, bending over the fallen creature. The woman was not seriously hurt, however, and at Vambrace's suggestion they gave her a few dollars, and the ayah and the little girls parted between them was kept too busy, so that they needed another, and that she would take this one if she proved respectable. Thus it is that the most innocent and guileless oftentimes forge links for themselves.

The following day when Vambrace entered the luxurious parlor of Mr. Churchton and his party, bearing in one hand a great bunch of spotless lilies, and in the other a cluster of blush roses, he saw the woman of the day before feeding a great green and gold parrot in a cage.

Smilingly he turned to Lillian, who was watching the two, and asked pleasantly:

"So you engaged her?"

And the girl replied just as carelessly, not knowing how much hung upon their light words:

"Yes, I liked her. She brought Polly with her. He is a great pet, and she loves him so that we did not have the heart to separate them. She said she would lend him to us, and so we have Mr. Polly with us," going up to the cage and smiling in her gentle way at the ugly bird and the still uglier woman, who stood like a machine, slowly feeding her pet. Better for those two—the handsome, dashing man of the world, with his greysome secret, and the gentle, beautiful girl, whose young heart was already turning toward him—had the quiet woman been some infernal machine filled with dynamite, than what she was—an instrument of fate.

"Pets like me," Vambrace said carelessly, advancing toward the cage.

The minute the bird heard his voice it began to rumple up his feathers and let forth ear-splitting screams, which made Lillian cover her pretty ears with her hands, and brought Rose from an inner room.

"Well, of all things!" she cried, looking from one to the other. Then, seeing the flowers, she asked roguishly:

"Which one of those which is for who, Lilly, these roses will best become you." then, laughing like a naughty child, she began to arrange the flowers in a tank which was always left to her, as she had much taste in such things, and was fond of them. Selecting the most beautiful of the lilies, she went to Lillian, and, drawing back one knee, fastened it among the laces at her neck; then, standing off, she cried delightedly:

"There, my girl shows why she was given her name, for it is the most becoming brace, when we twins were born our father started for a delicate tribute to our two grandmothers. He had no idea should named Amelia after his mother, and the other Lillian after his grandmother. I suppose I would have been the Letitia, because I was the eldest by a few minutes of two hours, and papa was a great stickler for propriety, but we would have said that as his mother was the eldest lady in the first place, and secondly because the paternal name was the most beautiful of the two, the elegant name of his revered mother must have been bestowed upon the first born and which it had pleased kind Providence to send him and his faithful helpmate, or, in other words, he felt impressed with the idea it would be but right and correctly proper that the first-born son should be named for the mother of aforesaid wife, must of necessity be called for the grandmother of co-twins. Hence, therefore and forever, should they be known as Amelia and Letitia, living monuments to the greater glory, honor, of those two excellent ladies now deceased."

Rose paused, out of breath, and Lillian said between her gasps of laughter:

"Indeed, Rosie, to make fun of poor papa, who has been dead so many years!" but Rose continued, her face perfectly straight:

"I am sure that I shall be on the grave and excellent manner in which stern fathers talk upon the stage. However, dear little mother said that we were her two flowers, and that the one who appeared to be her most beautiful Lillian, that she chose. Imagine our Lilly as Amelia!"

They laughed heartily, but suggested:

"It could just as well think of you as Letitia, Miss Rose."

To which she returned: "I suppose I would try to remember it, but I think each of friend Juliet about a rose smelling as sweet called by another name—or was it Rowe who said it? Sir, my memory is a awfully rusty. We used to do up Romeo and Juliet in this house. We had a nice bare window at our country house, and she'd hang out of that, and I climb on a stepladder. The ladder got rather wobbly after a time, evidently had the rickets when we were about the age, so it was spouting away, down comes ladder, then Juliet, and Romeo and I picked up all we could. We utterly ruined the ladder."

"Oh, or, Miss Rose," Vambrace cried. The quaint manner in which she chattered forth her yarns amused him more than he had known for years, and he spoke he moved closer to the parrot's cage and it said something in a hollow, rasping voice.

Both girls cried together:

"It does talk, doesn't he?" but Vambrace turned abruptly away and walked once more. In the deep picturesque of the bird, the words were spoken years for several days:

"Forever and forever."

CHAPTER VII.

"Love will find its way
Through paths where wolves would fear to prey."

And if it dares enough, 'twere hard
To banish met not some reward."

Mr. Churchton and Vambrace were watching a game of tennis from the veranda of the tennis club, when the latter said quietly:

"I want to have a little conversation with you, at your convenience."

"Mine's yours, my dear boy." was the pleasant reply. "With all pleasure. Churchton any one under forty was a boy.

"When can you come to my rooms after dinner tonight and I will tell you something?" was the next question, and when the older gentleman had assented Vambrace joined the players and appeared to be vitally interested. As he was leaving the grounds an hour later, a coolie came up, and, without a word, slipped a card into his hand. The young man looked at it and an expression of deep regret, commingled with something else, settled upon his brow.

"Beware of my curse. The sun is shining now, but a tempest is coming, when you will feel the weight of my anger."

With a low muttered imprecation, Vambrace hastily gazed upward. Not a cloud was to be seen, but in the distance his

buck ear caught the rumble of thunder, and he shivered from head to foot.

Just then he heard a rough, boyish voice:

"Oh, Rosie, you make me tired! You promised to take that walk with me, and I think you're a regular duffer if you don't come."

Then rang out a voice so tired and dispirited that Vambrace scarcely recognized it as Rose's:

"Well, I don't care if you do. I'm tired, warm, and I don't want to go, and that's all."

"Well, great Robinson! If I don't make you mind better when we're married, young lady!"

Vambrace could not change his position without allowing them to know he had overheard a portion of the conversation, so he concluded to remain where he was, trying to stop his ears.

"Married! Us married! Well, my boy, I think you have really lost your head. I marry you! Never as long as I have the least bit of sense left, and I think I have some!"

The boyish voice had a break in it when he cried:

"Not marry me, Rosie? Why, uncle has always intended that it should be married, Rosie, Rosie! Why, you know, old girl, that I think lots of you."

"And I do of you, you baby, but I do not intend to marry for years and years, and then I will marry a man, not a schoolboy."

"You are a schoolgirl yourself."

"Not any longer. I am a young lady in society. Oh, yes, I am. Though, Alex dear, I wish I were just a little girl and you my bright, happy little girl; then perhaps my heart would stop aching so bad. It hurts, Alex. It hurts so, and the sweet voice quivered.

Instantly the boy's manner changed. Although Vambrace could not see them, he knew that the boy had flown into his kind young arms and was endeavoring to comfort her.

"There, there, darling, don't cry. There, I won't say another word. I would like to think of marrying you time way off, but if you want some one else, why, I won't stand in the way. I suppose I am just a mean, bashful boy."

In smothered tones, as though her little face was buried on his shoulder, as indeed it was, Rose whispered:

"You are a dear, good boy, and I love you with all my heart, though not in a grown up way. You and I have been such good playmates that it is hard to realize that one or us is suddenly grown up. Why, Alex, we always used to play husband and wife in the old days, and were so happy. Why does not that hold a niche this way?"

"Dearest Rosie, tell me—can I help you?"

"Why, dear, none of them in Enid. I'll find some one else to make my heart ache, and after a bit I shall forget such shocks. It will grow nice and case-hardened. Never mind, dear, I am not a little wild rose, but a great, big, coarse, obtrusive rose, which can stand lots of beatings and drenchings of the rain, and hob up again."

In spite of himself Vambrace listened, and he could not help admiring the girl trying so nobly to cover her pain.

Then, as he listened, he heard Alex, with a gentleness and manliness which was highly creditable, say soothingly:

"Darling, I am not sure that you are only Rosebud yet. Your leaves are close folded about that heart of yours some day they will open, and we can see the golden heart within."

"Why, Alex," came in amazed tones, "that is lovely! But listen, dear. I had a beautiful rosebud which contained two buds. Just as an experiment, I pulled one, and put it in my bosom close to the radiator, where it was very warm. That bud was gone the next morning, the other bud waited a week longer. Alex, the forced little bud became a rose, but it soon wilted and died, while the other lasted many days and perfumed the whole room. Sometimes circumstances leave a girl into womanhood in a single hour; again she gradually matures. I think I am no longer a Rosebud. Keep my confidence, dear. It has helped me to say what I have."

"And I will help you!"

"No one can but myself. Come, old man, I am ready to go back. No, it will do me good now, and besides I do not want to meet the others just yet. I want to be with you dear—just with you, my dear playmate and more than brother. Come, kiss me, dear, and say you forgive me for any pain I may have given you, and then we will have a good time together," and then Vambrace heard their young voices trail off in the distance, and only their steps rang on the ground where he had thrown himself, wondering and sympathizing with all his heart, as Vincent stumbled over him; then the two sat and had a friendly smoke. Suddenly Vincent looked up, and cried severely:

"Was that a drop of rain?"

Vambrace turned white as death and sprang to his feet, saying hastily:

"I heard nothing."

"Oh, well, a little wetting won't hurt us," Vincent replied lazily. "Last summer I had been reading pretty steady, and so spent the greater part of my vacation in the pine woods of Maine. We fellows—there were six of us—liked nothing better than a good soaking now and a while. Jove! but you are walking fast. Is that your second wind coming, as he endeavored to keep pace with the tall figure before him.

Overhead, the great clouds banked together, and deep peals of thunder rolled threateningly. Suddenly there came a terrible flash of lightning, and a peal which sounded like an artillery report. Vincent shuddered slightly, and lifted his head to the coming storm. It made his young blood dance in his veins; then, hearing an exclamation, he turned to his companion. He was livid and shaking from head to foot. His trembling hands covered his eyes, and, to his horror, Vincent heard him gasp:

"For God's sake, get me under shelter, quick!"

For a moment the American felt such an utter contempt that he was tempted to go on and leave one he believed a coward to his own resources, then his better nature prevailed, and he guided the terrified man, whose hands shut out every particle of light, into a deserted Buddha temple, and, interposed his own body between Vambrace and the doorway.

The storm was a severe one, and the downpour was heavy, and as long as it lasted Vambrace sat huddled on the floor, his face buried on his arms. At last, however, the thunder died away in distant rumblings; the lightning ceased, and nothing remained of the storm but the glittering drops on the shrubbery and the sweet damp odors rising from the dreaded earth. Then it was that Vincent spoke, his voice sounding more formal than ever, for he never relaxed in Vambrace's presence—he dreaded him too much:

"Mr. Vambrace, the storm is over."

The man spoken to raised a face from which every trace of color had fled; even the lips were grey-hued, and said huskily:

"I cannot thank you enough. You despise a man who is afraid of anything, do you not?"

"None of us can help certain aversions," Vincent replied, trying to speak cordially, and utterly failing.

Vambrace rose and, going to the door, looked out with a shiver before he said, slowly:

"Mr. Lyndstock, I envy you with all my heart. Do you believe in curses? Do you think it lies in the power of any one to influence the future of another, and all who come after him?"

For a moment Vincent thought the man was joking; but a glance at the white face convinced him that whatever else he might

"You are cruel, Lilly."

think, Vambrace was thoroughly in earnest now.

"Why, of course not. What we are, or what we do, is according to our own efforts. Of course, if a man has no chance in life in the world, his circumstance hold him down. I suppose if you and I had been born poor men we would have mingled many of the same things of life which are now necessities to us; if we had been the children of criminals we would have fallen into association with people of that class, and then become criminals ourselves. People may help others up, or hold them down, but not with blessing or curse."

The man was gradually returning to Vambrace's face. "You honestly believe that to be true?" he asked.

"I know it is. You are of a nervous temperament. Probably at some time when you were young you were frightened at the storm, and that made an impression upon you. Come, I think you had better try to overcome it. Just stay out in a good storm, and see how it will affect you."

"A storm delights!"

He defied it with fresh rain against one's cheeks; the grand lightning; the great thunder—why, man, I love it! I was on the best crew that Oxford ever did at college was written on birch bark right out in just such a storm."

"What is your college?" Vambrace asked, as though to change the subject, as the two started for their hotel.

"Yale. I first took a scientific course, and was graduated in the class of 1901, when I returned and took the law course, and just before we came abroad was admitted to the bar."

"I'm an Oxford man; my college is Christ, but I was twenty-five when I finally finished. Your universities put out very young men, do they not?"

Vincent laughed a little nervously. So many had evinced wonder at the progress he had always made that he was self-conscious relative to his really brilliant college record.

"Well, you see, I never want in for athletics, and so put in all my time plugging. I was well started to begin with, and it never was any effort for me to understand a thing."

Vambrace looked at the flushed young face beside his own. The fresh, clean blood of school still flowed in his veins; there was no unhappy past to come up and fill his hours with dread. Were it not better for him to take himself out of the way and let his rival have full sway? For a few moments he tortured himself with this thought; then he remembered a new light which was dawning in a pair of soft, sweet eyes; the flush which arose in two dimpled cheeks when he entered the room, and a certain fascinating, tremulous quiver of the girlish lips, and he knew that Vincent's fate had already been decided. With his knowledge of men and affairs, he knew that Lilian Greencastle already loved him, and that he had implanted his image in her heart to the exclusion of any other. With a certain wild feeling in his heart he thought:

"I will defy fate and call her my own, and, to make her happy, I will overturn heaven itself if necessary."

CHAPTER VIII.

"Love is your master, for he masters you."

During the magnificent storm which deluged the city, filled the streams and

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wife at fifteen. A wife to such a husband, one who smirched my young soul before my innocence was passed, until I hated myself, him, the whole world. A man's love is not a question. Question, but it does seem as though he might have nursed it for a few months. I was good then," the Irish blue eyes filled with bitterly pathetic tears, which her burning eyeballs dried before they could fall, "and, though I was a child, better than these girls, who have never been brought in contact with evil. How could I stop so when I was neglected, abused, beaten, and finally thrust out on the street at night, to starve or be carted barefooted! I wonder if any woman wouldn't have snatched at the first shelter offered her, no matter how heavy the price." The beautiful face was covered with two trembling hands, and sobs shook the perfect figure. For a few minutes the woman stood at the window, looking out at the rain-drenched landscape. The Peak was hidden from her view; even in the street were a few belated people in jinrikishas and chairs who were hastily carried to their place of shelter. At last she turned and, looking steadily at her reflection in the mirror, she continued:

"After all your adventures, to be well treated, to think yourself safe, you should overtake you! To think that of all men in the world Quinton Vambrace should cross your path again! Ah, my fine gentleman, betray me, and as there is a God in Heaven I will strike the heart of the proud girl whom you are trying to win; I will, so help me all the powers of evil!" and she lifted her long, white fingers until they ached.

The beautiful woman finally returned to the window seat, dropping to the floor, looked out once more. The storm was over, and the sun was in its renewed splendor. There she sat, with her chin in the hollow of her hand, until she saw Vambrace and Vincent emerge from two chairs and come up the stairs leading to the hotel together. Her colorless face grew scarlet, and as she gazed at them she whispered:

"Oh, my darling, if you only knew how I love you! Not with the love of a silly girl, whose heart is unawakened, but with a passion only a woman of my age and experience can know. I would give my life for you, and yet I must ever be unhappy. Oh, love! love! give me just a corner in your heart!"

Another installment of this extremely interesting story will appear in next week's issue of this paper. The Ledger is without question the best 5 cent weekly for the price of subscription now published in the United States. Special free gifts of cameras and patterns are offered on other pages of this paper. Do not miss them.

In the Lion Country.

A recent exploring expedition along the boundaries of British East Africa killed thirty-nine lions and had many thrilling adventures. Charles Mead, who was in command, writes: "Baird had a few days before been mauled by a lion. The brute charged out from a patch of brush and Baird's shot failed to stop him. The next moment the mad beast had knocked him down and was mauling him. Baird's fox-terrier pluckily attacked the lion, and his unmerited reputation for discretion, performed prodigies of valor in worrying the animal. His way into the lion's mouth. But he was not to his majesty's taste, and he left the struggling terrier for the little hurt. Meanwhile Baird's two shikaris behaved splendidly. One came up behind the lion, and pulled, while the other very coolly shot him through the heart. Baird had received wounds, some of them deep, but the miracle of his escape is that as fast as they were sponged on when it was seen that the lion's jaw had been broken by Baird's first shot."

Captain Maud also says: "Threading my way through the bush myself, I got a shot at a fine leopard, and was lucky enough to lay him low. A little further on I sighted Mr. Hunter's camp, from which I had been separated for about ten days, and was soon in the midst of congratulations on my leopard from Butter, Baird and Duff, who modestly put forth no claim for their morning's sport—four fine lion skins, then being pegged out to dry. They had also secured two young lions alive. Hunter soon fed on tinned milk, but it did not agree with their delicate economy and after a few days they died."

Another adventure is thus related: "The next day Jemadar Shahzad Mir was charged by a lioness after she had received a bullet in the heart from my rifle. The amount of vitality these beasts possess after having been mortally wounded is extraordinary. Shahzad Mir's hand and arm were badly mauled. Luckily the caravan was close up and I soon had his wounds dressed."

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If you see it in an unconfirmed rumor that the Japanese won a great victory it is probably so.

The man who is always telling what a lot of good he would do if he had money never has any.

Tibet does not yet know that it is a part of the British Empire, but it will learn the fact soon enough.

If he had his choice General Kouropatkin would much prefer to lose a Japanese army than one of his own.

After a man has tried to talk business to a woman for five minutes he is prepared to sympathize with dry-goods clerks.

While our stock of gold is getting low, Alaska is getting ready to make a sensational shipment as soon as the season opens.

Russian generals must feel unspeakable joy to notice how the Japanese are falling into the trap Russia is laying for them when it retreats.

No wise girl ever lets the young man she has spotted for her own see her with her hair in curl papers until after the minister says said his fatal say.

Paris newspapers will be sent to Chicago direct without being handled in New York, though some of them should be held up at the seaport and fumigated for a day or two.

Kouropatkin has arrived at the front. The surprising thing about this fact is that the front wasn't also knocked out when he bumped against it.

It must be quite pleasant to go to war against a great commander like Kouropatkin, who is always going to do something fierce and terrific the next day.

In Japan the two political parties have united in support of the Government. To hit a Russian head wherever seen is the only politics now in the island empire.

What Judge Parker especially likes about the instructions from Georgia and other Southern States is that the certainty of electoral votes goes with them.

Paris newspapers will be sent to Chicago direct without being handled in New York, though some of them should be held up at the seaport to be fumigated for a day or two.

Professor James Bryce, the British historian, says that Roosevelt is the greatest President since Washington's time. Professor Bryce may have overlooked Abraham Lincoln.

RIVALS FOR WEALTH;
—OR—
GREATER THAN GOLD.

BY ELLA MARTIN.

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CHAPTER VI.
ALBERTA'S ARREST.

It made no difference to old man Dalton, the defense which Alberta made, the protestations of innocence and the strong denials. James, he said, could prove that he had twice beheld with his own eyes a meeting between herself and a man concealed in the little patch of timber on the knoll beyond the orchard. But he could not swear to the appearance of the man, on account of the distance and the gloom.

Before Alberta could fully realize her situation officers from Carthage arrived, and by 10 o'clock that night she was lodged in the city jail.

Honor Dalton found himself alone again in the gloomy, quiet house, with only the servants and his own conscience for company. Alone, too, with the thought that no Alberta with sharp and ready tongue; no Ethelyn with soothing, magnetic touch.

He was alone—alone; and the world seemed cheerless and cold and dark.

But he had had revenge on two more of the sex he despised; he had chested and outwitted them both.

If nothing could be proved against Alberta, she would be released, of course, he thought. He did not want her to be found guilty; but something had to be done to show the world that an effort had been made to clear up the mystery of the girl's mysterious disappearance.

A message had been flashed over the wires informing the girl's guardian that she was missing, and inquiring if she had returned home. The answer came in the negative.

Then a message was received from Ethelyn's mother, begging her guardian to employ the services of a detective, and recommending him for allowing him to come to the child she had entrusted to his care. She should come, she informed him, at an early date, to see him about it, if news of Ethelyn was not received soon.

To this letter Mr. Dalton replied that he should employ some of the best detectives obtainable, and that Ethelyn should go to Chicago for one of the Pinkerton force. He assured her, in a brotherly manner, that everything was done that could be done, and she need not worry.

There was no cause, for as he knew, he said, for Ethelyn to leave the house in this manner. But perhaps she had a lover who had persuaded her to elope with him. And it might be that Alberta had come to the house for that very purpose, as she could have more liberty and thus be enabled to leave without detection. Had gone on the night, evidently, and as he had gone to town the following day on his other errand he had not discovered her absence until dinner was served the following evening.

Alberta he believed to be innocent; but he had felt it to be his duty to have her held for examination, that the matter might be investigated.

All this, and more, he told her, expressing his brotherly sympathy to her whom he had not seen for years, but he did not ask her to come to Dalton House.

Meanwhile, Alberta, who was held in Carthage jail, made as many appeals as possible. She was told that search was being made for her guardian, and that the evidence was forthcoming the State would prosecute the case, if not, her liberty would be restored to her.

She asked for writing materials, and was given them. And it was then that she was told that she told her story to Jack—told it on paper, for she would not tell it otherwise, even if he had been there. In imagination she saw the look of horror that would come into his form shrinking from her; the cold yet courteous manner in which he would take his leave of her, after hearing and seeing the disclosures, and she knew she could never have found courage to tell it to him, and therefore she would write it. And so she began her letter to Jack Raynor thus:

"Mr. Raynor:—You see the time is past when I can call you Jack. I was never entitled to that privilege. I have deceived you from the first. I was living a lie; I am not and never was Alberta Lynn. My real name is Phyllis Dale.

"I am an orphan and was cast upon the world at a tender age, and my friends with whom I found refuge educated me for the stage. You know I always refused to sing for you. I knew you would detect the fraud if you once heard me. You knew me for the adventuress I am, for Alberta knew even with her rich, strong voice, could never sing like me.

"But to my story. I met your old sweetheart, she being one of my calling, among theater people. We were as much alike as twins could ever be, and we became fast friends. We played in the same company, and took the part of twins in one play. And we roomed together.

"Alberta told me the history of her past life. She had run away from home to become an actress, had deserted friends and lover. She showed me your picture and told me she should marry you if she ever returned. But she loved stage life and meant never to abandon it, she said.

"Then, when she grew weary, she gave me her name, her parents, her position in life, and you. She seemed to realize that she would never get well, and so she told me everything, every little incident of your former life together, both as playmates and betrothed lovers. She gave me all her effects, including her picture, and told me to go back and marry you; for she knew I loved you even as she did, and that I would be glad of an opportunity to leave it for good.

"They have mourned me as lost to them,' she said; 'they will welcome you. Jack, who was ever to have knighted, will love you because of the past. He is strong and true and brave. Be all to him now the difference, and he will be satisfied. My grave will be made happy again, which cannot be the case if I live.' For I am at the beginning of my career, and could not give it up. But I shall not live, and to you, Phyllis Dale, I bequeath my handsome and all my wealth.

"She did not live, and after she died I was doubly lonely, for I had no companionship then while I lived. Alberta Lynn was buried as Phyllis Dale, and I went home to Dalton House, but my welcome was not overcome me as their runaway daughter.

"As you know, I have been living home, a position in society were things I have never known, and often dreamed of—and then your love. I might say that I call you Jack, after all. It was too much, for I had a conscience and it would not become hardened to that last deception.

"You know the rest. You told me you love me and hope, and then came away, leaving me to fulfill my pledge.

"You followed me, remember what you said—that you were not going to kill me for my difference. You promised as if I deserved it. Why, dear, I was doing the right thing when I was trying to prevent you free from a bond that was never made to bind you, and you did not know. I was replacing falsehood with truth, and you never know that she had even made the acquaintance of Robert Grieve.

"You must not defend me yourself," she said to Jack pathetically, "for I shall, as both in the eyes of the world afterward, prove I have wronged you. But you find some one to take my case, if you will; you may do all you can do without having your name connected with the affair.

"Then, when I am free, and the matter has died down a bit, I will write you and wish it. If not, you shall receive payment for your services, for I know you need it, and I am in a position to discharge the debt. Is it a bargain?"

He pressed the hand he was still holding to his lips.

"It is a bargain," he replied. "I will leave no stone unturned, no means untried, to free you from this charge."

"The man who is instrumental in freeing me, and clearing me from suspicion, will be the right hand of Jack Raynor," she replied, "and I shall not say him nay."

Jack looked down into the proud, glorious eyes upon his face.

But she turned to the future for the rest. She knew she could not marry him, at least, not openly, before the death of Homer Dalton, and still could not be sure of that, for the old man would leave, for once let him discover that he was about to disinherit his will.

But she would doubtless be able to manage affairs some way, once she was out of this predicament, and that would be soon, she could not doubt. Jack was so strong and her, and now that there was some one interested in her welfare she felt confident she would ere long be free.

Her heart swelled with exultation. To triumph over Honor Dalton was more than all the rest, if only he could know that she had triumphed. But how, when she should be the wife of Robert Grieve, enjoying his wealth and the Honor Dalton name? Honor be dead, and could not know of it. Therein lay the only drawback to her complete triumph.

She smiled softly to herself when Robert had gone.

How easy it all had been—how easy!

Another hour, and contentment would from her enamored suitor, whom her witching glances and seductive smiles had caught in her net. Ah, she knew her power.

He had come this time to inform her that he had secured for her the best counsel in the State. She thanked him with her slow, sweet smile. He kissed her hands again and soon afterward departed.

She was alone again—alone with her thoughts of Jack, her hopeful future; but before the pleased look had died out of her face another visitor was admitted, and before her, handsome and self-confident as ever, stood Jack Raynor.

CHAPTER VII.
IN A PRIVATE ASYLUM.

Doctor and Madame Rudolph, keepers of a so-called private asylum in the city of Carthage, could have disclosed the whereabouts of Ethelyn Cleave had they so desired, but they were not in the habit of disclosing anything that they chose to keep secret, and they had chosen to keep the secret of Ethelyn's whereabouts.

Ethelyn was in the asylum, but not as a patient. She was a prisoner, and had been for a month.

Her mother had received the letter from Mr. Dalton, and had replied that she would be there on the following day, and had come, but Ethelyn was not to be found.

Mrs. Cleave had been informed that Ethelyn had left the house in company with a gentleman, and that was all the information she could obtain.

Mr. Dalton had received a letter from Mrs. Cleave, stating that she had been unable to find Ethelyn, and that she had left Carthage, and was going to Chicago to search for her herself.

Mr. Dalton had replied that he was sorry that Mrs. Cleave had left Carthage, as Ethelyn had returned, and was at home. He had not written her, as he had supposed that Mrs. Cleave would remain in Carthage, and that Ethelyn would be with her.

Mrs. Cleave had written that she would return to Carthage at once, and Mr. Dalton had written that Ethelyn was at home, and that he would keep her there until her mother arrived.

Mrs. Cleave had not arrived, and Ethelyn was not at home.

Ethelyn had been kidnapped by Mrs. Rudolph, who had been employed by Mr. Dalton to do the deed.

Mr. Dalton had written to Mrs. Rudolph, telling her that Ethelyn had returned home, and that he had written to her mother to that effect, and that Mrs. Cleave was coming to Carthage to get her daughter.

Mrs. Rudolph had written that Ethelyn had left the house with a gentleman, and that she had not been able to find her.

Mr. Dalton had written

sired. But this fair maiden had been entrusted to their care, and the strictest caution concerning her imprisonment had been enjoined upon them, and therefore the utmost secrecy regarding her was maintained by them.

She had been brought to this institution in a closed carriage and closely veiled, after having been drugged. The man who negotiated with the couple seemed to represent some one else; one, too, who was aware of the methods done by the owners of the institution. His master, he said, desired to part the girl from an unworthy lover. Therefore, she must be dead to the world for a number of years. In fact, she was not to be released during the lifetime of her uncle who had placed her there.

"She will tell you any story to work upon your sympathies," said the man, who was but doing his master's bidding, "but credit none of them. She is not to be trusted."

Madame Rudolph smiled grimly.

"We have had such cases before, and we have invariably tamed the rebellious spirit. There is young blood in the veins of maidens, and it is sometimes necessary to resort to extreme measures in order to tame them. But we have the means. Let not your master's heart be troubled; the girl shall not see the outside of these walls till his spirit has been in fight. If that be his wish."

"But she will need careful watching," he persisted. "Her lover awaits her coming, and she will be sure to go to him."

"My master will send you monthly checks while she is in your keeping, and it is to your interest to let her escape."

"Say no more," replied Dr. Rudolph, "and have no fears." And James Gilbert knew it was he, took his departure.

He had scarcely left the asylum before he came face to face with Jack Baynor.

The two men stared at each other, but neither spoke. James, the servant of Homer Dalton, tried to place the big, bload gentleman, but could not do so. Jack, on the contrary, had a good memory for faces, and recognised the man as one whom he had seen about the premises of Mr. Dalton.

It was not known at that time that Ethelyn was missing, and Jack wondered much what business Mr. Dalton's serving man could have at the asylum.

Afterward, when the news of the young girl's disappearance reached him; when Alberta Dalton came to be in prison on a charge of making away with her rival for the wealth of Mr. Dalton, with the aid of her accomplice, who, of course, was the man he had met coming from the gates of the Dalton premises, then he began to feel enlightened concerning the keepers of the asylum.

"Well," he said to himself, "if they recognize me as I recognized the man in the habit of meeting in the wood, I shall be held, too. We shall be even, then, I guess."

Later he received Alberta's letter.

It was some days after this that Jack, Baynor stood in the presence of Madame Rudolph at the asylum.

"My niece, Ethelyn Cleave—you have not let her escape?" he asked somewhat anxiously, after introducing himself as Homer Dalton.

"She is safe," replied the madame; "her number is 9, and you will wish to see her?"

"Yes; I would see for myself that she is still here. I have promised her uncle. Perhaps if I talk with her I may persuade her to listen to reason. Is she very rebellious?"

"She was at first," she said. "There is no quelling her. I have had to resort to extreme measures; but she is in a cell from which there is no escape. I will tune her yet. She is on bread and water, and only one meal a day at that. I have to let her think that I believe she is insane, but she knows I am not, and she would kill me if she could."

"Take me to her, please."

The woman led the way.

"I suppose you were a much older man, Mr. Dalton," she remarked, as they passed together down the long corridor. "I judged by the description your servant made—namely, that she should not be released during your lifetime and you were not likely to live many years."

"My man may have misled you as to my age, supposing me to be much older," he said. He was very much excited at the time, no doubt; my self and constable trouble with my niece. By the way, what were the terms he made with you? I want no misunderstanding as to that, and my man may have made a mistake in that, as well."

"Our terms are one month, sir. In the price we agreed upon. He paid for the first month in advance."

"That is quite correct," replied Jack.

By this time they had reached the door of Ethelyn's cell, which the woman proceeded to unlock.

"Permit me to go in alone," he said; "it will best, I think."

The woman assented to this, and a moment later the heavy door swung to behind him, and he found himself standing for the first time in the presence of Ethelyn Cleave.

She was lying prostrate upon a hard couch, her head resting upon its appearance. Her eyes were wild with an insane light. She stood facing him, her beauty dimmed by the ghastly gleam in her eyes.

"Friend or foe?" she demanded in a low, subdued voice, looking like a tragedy queen.

"Friend," he replied softly, not wishing his voice to penetrate the heavy oaken door outside of which, no doubt, Madame Rudolph still stood.

"Then, if you are really a friend, provide me means with which to kill that she-devil —that accursed woman! If I do it will kill her if once I get my hands onto a weapon. Have you a knife?"

He shook, placing his finger to his lips, enjoined silence.

"Do you understand?" he asked in a whisper.

"Yes," she breathed.

Then he raised his voice.

"Ethelyn Cleave, are you still bent on holding out against me, your legal guardian? Why will you not be reasonable? There is no escape for you, and you might as well submit."

He paused; then, listening, both could hear the receding footsteps of the woman along the passageway.

He turned and smiled at her knowingly.

She sprang to his side and caught his hands.

"Have you come for me? Who are you?" she cried. "Have you a weapon about you? Give it to me. I want to kill her! I will kill her!"

"Then you would but exchange this cell for another—a prison cell; and the change might not be for the better."

"I don't know about that. At any rate I shall have had revenge and something to be put there for. I shall have had the satisfaction of knowing that she has got her just deserts. But I have done nothing to deserve this fate; and prison could not be worse.

"How calm you are!" she cried. "It makes me want to shake you. It means much to me—your coming. My reason is trembling on its throne."

"Poor child! Do you think I do not know it? Be quiet. Don't you realize that nothing can harm you, now that I am here?"

"Yes, I know that nothing can harm me, if you care to prevent it; you are so big and strong and calm. Who are you? and what did you come here for? Tell me that."

"I come here for you. When I go out of here you go with me. Nay, don't faint, you foolish child," He caught her in his arms as she reeled backward.

"First, you must tell me everything," he said. "the quick about it. She, the she-devil"—with a smile—"may return at any moment. Tell me how you came to be here."

"I was drugged and brought here; that is all I know about it."

"What led up to it? For what purpose were you disposed of in this manner? And why should you be guarded so closely during the lifetime of Homer Dalton? And why is it now so urgent that he need pay one hundred dollars per month to have you kept here?"

"Because his life was not safe while I had my liberty."

"Tell me the whole story," he urged; there are reasons why I should know."

Her eyes opened. Must she tell him the details of the game she had played—the desperate game she had played and lost?

"You did not come here for my sake," she ventured.

"No, for another's. Do you know that Alberta Lynn is in prison awaiting trial for the murder of Homer Dalton? And that the authorities are searching for her lover, who is suspected of the crime?"

"No, no; I have not heard of it. And you are the lover? Why did she want a fortune when she had you?"

"She will have nothing to do with me," he replied. "Now, please be quiet for her. I shall have to commit several murders before she will believe I am not too good to be her husband."

"Please begin on the dragoness," said Ethelyn, quite calmly.

She was beginning to feel at ease in his presence, and confident that no harm could come to her now; therefore, she had grown calm.

"Yes," he answered, "we will kill her as we go out, and all the other overseers in the establishment if they get in our way."

She laughed like a child.

"By that time you will be bad enough to marry Alberta."

"I hope so. I mean to marry her anyway, even if I am no good for her after I have murdered the dragoness and slaughtered the servants."

"I believe you are good," she said earnestly. "Somehow, you inspire me with confidence."

"That is all there is to it," he told her. "My personality inspires confidence, and I get more credit than I deserve. I assure you I am thoroughly wicked. You just watch me murder the madame when we go out, and you will be convinced."

"I shall have a better opinion of you than ever, then," she said, laughing. "All she-dragons ought to be killed. But you don't seem ferocious, and there is such a quiet power about you that it makes one inclined to cringe to you. I feel inferior and very much as if I ought to kneel and kiss your hands in gratitude."

"What nonsense! If a great dog should pull you out of the water you would feel grateful to him, of course; but you would not necessarily feel yourself his inferior.

"And now, if you want me to take you out of here, you must tell me Homer Dalton's object in putting you in such an institution."

"Well," she replied, letting her eyes droop, "I hold a secret of his. I obtained possession of a written statement, which he termed his diary. In it he confesses to having committed a murder years ago when he was young."

"And you threatened to expose him unless he made you his heiress?"

"Yes."

She made the admission shamefacedly.

He did not seem to be surprised. Perhaps he thought it but a trait of human nature.

"And what happened then?"

Her face grew pale like a wild beast; his hands were about my throat before I could move or cry out. See! the purple marks are on my neck yet. The madame saw them, but she did not care; she still pretended that I was insane. She demanded the money she would get for keeping me here.

"Oh, I want her killed!" she added, stamping her foot and the wild light returning to her eyes.

"Have patience. We are going out now. I have a cab waiting, and I shall take you to a friend of mine for a while. You will be safe there, and I want you to keep secluded until I choose to bring you forth. Do you agree?"

"Certainly," replied Ethelyn. "I could not leave at all but for you. I would agree to any terms to get away from this place."

"Come, then," he said.

He stepped forward and opened the door. There was no one in the passage, and he led her along till they came to another door, which was found to be locked. He gave a loud knock, which quickly brought Madame Rudolph. A bolt was heard to slip back on the other side, and presently Madame Rudolph stood before them.

"I have decided," Jack said easily, "to take my niece with me. She has agreed to stay in her present quarters. The fee will be paid to you regularly, all the same, and you will be relieved of your charge."

Quick as a flash the woman sprang forward and slammed the door shut.

"Ah, I see the game, sir!" she hissed. "Fool that I was to trust you! You are the lover, not the uncle. But you shall never leave this place in company with the young lady. She was placed in our charge by her awful relatives. I have a right to detain her, and I will."

"Will you?"

Jack's voice was low and quiet, but there was a world of meaning in the words.

Madame then sprang toward the bell, but a pistol was thrust in her face, and a firm voice bade her pause.

She obeyed and stood panting and at bay.

"I am sorry it is not a man I have to deal with," said Jack.

Ethelyn enjoyed the discomfiture of the woman who had so lately ill-treated her.

"You promised to kill her," she said to Jack, knowing that it would frighten the madame without influencing him to do the deed.

He divined her purpose and slowly raised the pistol till it was pointed directly at the woman's head. And with a shriek she threw up her hands and fell fainting to the floor.

This was his opportunity, and he tore the bunch of keys from her belt; then, taking Ethelyn by the arm, he hurried her along the corridor.

"If she had reached the bell rope we should have had to fight our way out in earnest," he said, "for though the doctor seems to be absent at present, no doubt there are servants within calling distance, and they are sure to be well armed. Many deeds of violence have been committed, most likely, within these walls."

Once outside the building, they hurried along the street till they reached the vehicle he had in waiting; and a few moments later they were driving at a rapid pace toward the suburbs of the city.

"How did you find me?" asked Ethelyn, when they were well on the way.

"I happened to see James come out of the asylum, one day, and later, when I heard of your disappearance, I put two and two together and made four," was the answer.

The conclusion of this very captivating story will be presented to the readers of next week. Every subscriber is entitled to our free cameras and patterns as advertised on pages thirteen and fifteen.

COFFEE CATARRH

An Unsuspected Cause.

It is curious how many diseases come from a disordered nervous system which locates disease in some part of the body, and the primary cause can often be traced to coffee which first breaks down the nervous system. A Georgian says:

"There is no doubt coffee drove me nasal catarrh. The ceptim in my nose was all gone and the catarrh was eating its way, getting hold of the main bone of the nose. It also affected my sight very much.

"My nose was constantly dripping bloody water, but in two weeks' time after I quit coffee and used Postum in its place, I could see my way very well, the dripping from my nose stopped and my nose finally got perfectly well and healthy as far as is possible for the ceptim to grow back.

"There is no doubt it was a case of coffee catarrh and that was made very much worse by changing from coffee to Postum. The rest of my family took up the change drink and Postum relieved my wife and little boy of frequent headaches and what is called 'coffee headache' is not known in our family any more. Our sleep is much more refreshing.

"We have influenced many people to try Postum and all of them like it better the longer they use it and most of them say it is better than coffee." Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich.

Ten days trial Postum in place of coffee often works wonders. There's a reason.

Look in each package for the famous little book, "The Road to Wellville."

Bound to Please.

Young Lady—I have prevailed on my father to allow me to paint my portrait; but he doesn't like your work.

D'Auber—Why not?

"He says it will repose."

"Huh! He does, eh? Well, I'll paint you as "The Sleeping Beauty," and then see.

Pennsylvania's Double Route to Washington and New York.

The Fort Wayne, through Pittsburgh, Harrisburg and Philadelphia to New York, is the favored route to the East; standard fares. The Pan Handle route, via Columbus, Pittsburgh, Harrisburg and Philadelphia to New York. Also, the Pittsburgh and Philadelphia and New York tickets via Baltimore and Washington; standard fares only, no more than direct line tickets. Apply to C. L. Stakell, A. G. P. A., No. 2 Sherman street, Chicago, for details.

That Was All for Him.

"How old are you, madame?" asked the young lawyer who was doing a cross-examination stunt.

"I'm old enough to know that no gentleman would ask a lady how old she is," retorted the fair witness, angrily.

And the Court let it go at that.

Ladies, Preserve Your Youthful Appearance.

Madame Mignette's Beauty Cream and Skin Food removes every defect, spot, freckle, pimple, wrinkle, blackhead, making the skin soft, clear and smooth. It is perfectly harmless and will not injure the most delicate skin. Removes and brings back the youthful glow to the fact and ruddiness to the cheeks, preserving it in the condition until extreme old age. This preparation has been used for years and ladies are now using it and are more than delighted with the results.

Send 6c (10) cents for formula which you can have filled at any drug store at a very small cost. Do not delay, but write at once. Box 491, Blairsville, Pa.

Why She Was in It.

Phyllis—Charlie Short told me the other day that he preferred blonde girls.

Rachel—You mean Charlie Long. He proposed to me last week and I am a decided brunette.

Phyllis—True, dear; but then you have a fair income.

A HALF MILLION ACRES.

Government Lands Open for Settlement

in the Rosebud Indian Reservation in Southeastern South Dakota. The Chicago & North-Western Ry. is the direct line from Chicago to Bonesteel on the reservation border. Send 2 cent stamp for pamphlet "New Homes in the West" containing maps and full information as to the allotment of these fertile lands. W. B. Kniskern, 22 Fifth Avenue, Chicago, Ills.

Didn't Worry Him.

Her—My brother gets more than a hundred love letters every day.

Him—You don't say! And does he answer all of them?

Her—No, indeed! He gets them because he's a letter carrier.

WISER.

She—Is the world getting better?
He—It is getting wiser. I have an awful time trying to borrow money.

Shearing Lambs.

The father was giving the son some advice.

"Now that you are starting out in life," said the parent, "you will find it pays to cultivate the acquaintance of well-to-do people."

But the son shook his head.

"No, pop," he responded, "I will find it pays me better to cultivate the acquaintance of easy-to-do people. I am going to locate in Wall street."

Not What She Meant to Say.

"Are you still at work on your new novel, Miss Scribe?"

"No; I haven't had an idea in my head for several weeks, so I have been writing a lot of letters to my friends."

"Oh, papa! stop quick. Mamma has fainted."
"She's lucky. The water will revive her in an instant."

Just the Reverse.

"Yes, the big boys down at our school are very bad."

"I suppose the teacher keeps them in school as punishment?"

"No, she sends them home earlier than the rest of us."

"But I fought she punished them."

"That's punishment. We have a pretty teacher and all the boys are in love with her."

Why They Don't.

"All men seem to consider themselves lords of creation," she said. "You never hear of a woman going on that assumption."

"Certainly not," he replied. "They can't."

"I'd like to know why not."

"Because of their sex."

Thus she learned to choose her words more carefully.

Gentle Hint.

They were playing tennis on the old lawn. "Dear me," remarked the young man, with a far-away look in his eyes, "we never hear of old-fashioned kissing games any more. They have gone out of style."

"I don't agree with you," replied the pretty girl, "any game is a kissing game if you supply the kisses."

Exception.

The young man was waiting for his sweetheart to come down. Meanwhile her little sister was entertaining him.

"And does your dolly cry 'mamma' when any one squeezes it?" he asked, pleasantly.

The little girl seemed a bit confused.

"Well, not when a gentleman squeezes her," she chirped finally.

Suspicious.

Stubb—So this is called Temperance Town, eh? Well, there is something strange in the name.

Penn—Why, there are dozens of Temperance Towns.

Stubb—Yes; but the railroad booklet describes this one as a "great resort for fishermen."

Terrible Punishment.

Some one had been warning little Bobby about the place where bad boys go.

"And—and is there sulphur down there?" he faltered.

"Nothing but sulphur," responded the father.

"And, oh, papa, do they give it to you mixed with molasses?"

As a Rule.

Willie (after figuring)—Say, ma, what comes after a million?

Mother—A foreigner with a title, usually.

Not a Safe Bet.

"Yes, my boy," said the person during a call, as he laid his hand on the family Bible, "every word in this book is true."

"Well, I know the words are true," rejoined the wise youngster, "but I wouldn't advise you to bet on the figures since has been monkeying with on the family record page."

Misunderstood.

"Luk heah, Remus, how is it Ah doan' see yo' at meetin' eny mo'?"

"Why, de pawson insulted me."

"How so? He only said, 'Cum on, yo' horny-handed sons ob toil.'"

"Ah thought he sed 'horny-headed.' Dat means old Satan."

Those Unhappy Umpires.

"Say, I wouldn't be as superstitious as you for forty dollars."

"Who's superstitious?"

"Why you—carryin' a horseshoe to de ball game."

"Aw, go on! Dat's to soak de empire wit."

Anything to Start Him.

He (11:30 p. m.)—I'm not going until you admit that you love me.

She—Why in the world didn't you tell me that two hours ago?

Unkind of Her.

Willie—What makes that dog growl so?
Winnie—Oh, I guess he's one of those married dogs.

JOKES AND

Another Falling Out.

Sharpe—When Cranker tries to run up mountains with his automobile he always tells his friend some funny jokes."

Wheaton—Yes; he told me some of those jokes.

Sharpe—Did you catch on to them?

Wheaton—Oh, I tumbled, all right.

Too Many Rises.

"I hear that Harker is going to give up learning to be a chauffeur."

"Yes. The automobile tossed him up so much he is thinking of learning air navigation."

The Manhattan Limited, Leaving Chicago 1 O'Clock P. M.,

Makes the run to New York over Pennsylvania Short Lines in 25 hours. Alleghany Mountain scenery in the morning; pleasant interval in the barber's chair; luncheon enjoyed on the run from Philadelphia; then out at Twenty-third street station, New York, at 4 o'clock p. m. ready for a business or social engagement. Buffet parlor car connection at Harrisburg reaching Baltimore 12:29 noon. Washington 1:16 p. m. For through reservations apply to C. L. Kimball, A. G. P. Agt., No. 2 Sherman street, Chicago.

He Knew.

Grandpa—Willie, why do you study grammar?

Willie—So I can laugh when people make mistakes.

The Rosebud Reservation

lands are open in July. Full particulars as to date of registration, drawings and final entry, and as to character of soil and climate, requirements of the U. S. homestead laws, maps, etc., are contained in a pamphlet "New Homes in the West" issued by the Passenger Department, Chicago & North-Western Ry. Send 2 cent stamp for copy or call on any ticket agent The North-Western Line. W. B. Kniskern, 22 Fifth Avenue, Chicago, Ills.

Even Worse.

Again the struggling poet had been turned down.

"This is awful!" he sighed. "My patience is threadbare."

"Patience!" spoke his friend of rhyme. "Why, my trousers are threadbare."

Salesmen Wanted.

Agents, dealers and storekeepers, start in business for yourself on our capital. We make men's fine clothing to measure and you can sell our perfect fitting, highest class tailoring at a good profit for as little money as others sell ready made goods. You can control entire local trade with our line. Full line 200 up-to-date styles of woolens, fashion plates, etc., now ready and forwarded free. A great opportunity. Write today. Don't delay. Capital is a great help, but references are absolutely necessary. AMERICAN Woolen Mills Co., Dept. E, Washington Boulevard & Union St., Chicago.

Just That.

Bings—What a queer neck Jaggsby has! It looks like a funnel.

Bangs—It is.

Unusual.

Lushley—I admit I've had a couple of drinks.

Mrs. Lushley—Indeed! Why do you tell me that?

Lushley—Why, it's the truth.

Mrs. Lushley—I know. That's why I can't understand your telling it.

He—I suppose you hold that a man should never deceive his wife?
She—Oh, no. I shouldn't go as far as that. How would it be possible for the average man to get a wife if he didn't deceive her?

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FREE GOLD WATCH! An American movement watch, fully warranted to keep correct time, in Solid Gold Plated case, equal in appearance to a Solid Gold Watch costing $50.00. Given absolutely FREE to boys and girls or anyone for selling 20 pieces of our handsome jewelry at 10 cents each. Send us your address and we will send the jewelry postpaid, when sold send us $2 and we will send the watch by return mail. Write today. ELGIN JEWELRY CO., Dept. 324 CHICAGO.

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FOOD FACTS

What an M. D. Learned.

A prominent physician of Rome, Georgia, went through a food experience which he makes public:

"It was my own experience that first led me to advocate Grape-Nuts food, and I also know from having prescribed it to convalescents and other weak patients that the food is a wonderful rebuilder and restorer of nerve and brain tissue, as well as muscle. It improves the digestion and sick patients always gain just as I did in strength and weight very rapidly.

"I was in such a low state that I had to give up my work entirely and go to the mountains of this state, but two months there did not improve me; in fact, I was not quite as well as when I left home. My food absolutely refused to sustain me and it became plain that I must change; then I began to use Grape-Nuts food and in two weeks I could walk a mile without the least fatigue and in five weeks returned to my home and practice, taking up hard work again. Since that time I have felt as well and strong as I ever did in my life.

"As a physician who seeks to help all sufferers I consider it a duty to make these facts public." Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich.

Trial 10 days on Grape-Nuts when the regular food does not seem to sustain the body will work miracles.

"There's a reason."

Look in each package for the famous little book, "The Road to Wellville."

Not Good Taste.

Stubb—Now that's what I call gall. The idea of that doctor making his calls in an automobile!

Penn—Guilt? Why, I think it is very enterprising for a doctor to use an automobile.

Stubb—But he's a hoss doctor.

Useful Article.

Larry—Bedad, thot mon Mulligan is wonderful. A sanddagger hild him up on a lonely strate.

Denny—Awn phwat did Mulligan do?

Larry—Phwat did he do? Phoy, he tuk th' bag away awn carried ih' sand home fer his ould woman to scrub wid.

Horrors of Solitude.

Mr. Minks (reading)—"The captain's wife was the only one who escaped, and she was thrown by the waves upon the beach of an uninhabited island."

Mrs. Minks—Poor thing! How did she ever button her dress in the back, the next morning?

Natural Deduction.

She—So you danced with Miss DeHopper at the ball last night?

He—Yes. Did she tell you?

She—Oh, no; but I saw her going into a chiropodist's the morning.

Deficient in Imagination.

"That man with the whiskers is the greatest curiosity I ever laid eyes on."

"In what respect?"

"He was in India when Kipling was and hasn't a single thing to tell about him."

Aunt Mariar—Law sakes, Silas, what have yer got that harness on backward fur?
Uncle Silas—Shet up, will ye? How do ye know which way I'm goin'?

A Domestic Difficulty.

"Is that the new girl?"

"Yes."

"How long is she going to stay?"

"Well, I'm going to try to keep her until after the dessert comes on, but I'm afraid she'll quit after the third course."

Trouble Ahead.

"This race problem is a dreadful thing."

"Yes," answered young Mrs. Torkins; "whenever I see Charley get a pencil and begin to figure on the entries in a race, I know there's going to be trouble."

Squeezing a Client.

"What are you kicking about?" asked the lawyer.

"Why, we won the case," replied the client, "but I can't see what I get out of it!"

"You get enough to pay your lawyer's fees, don't you? What more do you want?"

Coming Around.

Mrs. Caffrey—And how is that pretty young widow? Is she reconciled to her loss yet?

Mrs. Malaprop—No; she ain't exactly reconciled yet, but they do say she's got the man picked out.

Peace to His Ashes.

Mrs. DeSwell—You seem to be a great lover of the weed, Mr. Puffington. Does your father smoke as much as you do?

Puffington—Well, I should hope not.

Mrs. DeSwell—What do you mean?

Puffington—He has been dead ten years.

He Had Been There.

Mamma—Willie, how can you be so naughty? I'll just tell your papa when he comes home.

Willie—O' on; jest do it an' see how quick he'll spank you for tellin' tales.

No More Left.

"Are there any golf links around here?"

"Nope; Reuben Dodd shot the last of them critters the spring o' '98."

Modern Pugilist.

Timkins—That dog of mine can do almost anything but talk.

Bimkins—Is he a fighter?

Timkins—No. Didn't I just tell you he couldn't talk?

Wedlock's Blisters.

Miggles—There are times when it is advisable to listen to a fool's advice.

Mrs. Miggles—Well, go ahead, my dear; I'm listening.

Between Friends.

Fred—The girl I am engaged to is very poor; in fact, she hasn't anything at all.

Joe—That's tough. And she will have still less after she marries you.

Asked and Answered.

Little Willie—What's a cannibal, pa?

Pa—One who loves his fellow man, my son.

Mack—Bessie must have been shimming yesterday when Jim Strong pulled her out of the water. Why, she can swim like a fish.

Ethel—Oh, but she really was in great danger this time. You see, she had all her engagement rings on, and they dragged her down.

AGENTS WANTED

Earn a Bicycle by taking orders from sample wheel furnished by us. We want an Active Agent in each town. Large profits. Write for our special offer. Richmond Cycle Co. 1904 Models **$8.75 to $17** Second-Hand Bicycles all makes & models **$3 to $8** Good as new **$7 to $12** 500 Second-Hand Wheels all makes & models **$3 to $6** Factory Clearing Sale at half. We Ship on Approval without a cent deposit, and allow TEN DAYS FREE TRIAL on every bicycle. Any wheel not satisfactory may be returned at our expense. Write for catalogue and our special offer. ALVORD-LEWIS, TIRE & RUBBER CO., Dept. 27 D Chicago

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$35 A WEEK AND EXPENSES to men with rigs to introduce our Poultry Goods. STANDARD MFG. CO., Dept. 7, Parsons, Kan.

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$75.00 Per Month and traveling expenses paid salesmen to sell goods to retail dealers. Experience unnecessary. POULTRY Co., Dept. D, C, Chicago

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DETECTIVE Shrewd, reliable men wanted in every locality. Address, with stamp, Chief Detective, American Detective Ass'n, Indianapolis, Ind.

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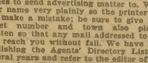

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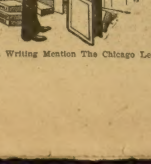

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When Writing Mention The Chicago Ledger. When Writing Mention The Chicago Ledger.

BROWN-EYED PEGGY.

BY M. EVELYN CUTHBERT.

It is summer—scented, glorious summer—and I am sitting writing in my small suburban garden, when suddenly, without any warning, my hat is knocked violently off by a small object, which I afterward discover to be a tennis ball.

"One of those confounded youngsters," I think, glancing round in some annoyance.

The Brewis's large family of boys and girls, live next door to me, and their garden is separated from mine only by a red brick wall, over the top of which now appears a girlish, laughing face, which does not belong to either Jessie or Rita.

Ah! little brown-haired, brown-eyed, laughing Peggy! I shall see her through all the after years as I see her now, with her head-hemmed hat pushed off her thick, short curls, and her round, brown cheeks flushing a warm, rich crimson as she hesitates, and then begins, shyly:

"I—I beg your pardon, was it I who knocked your hat off? I'm ever so sorry; I am, indeed!"

"Never mind," I return, smiling up at the bright, shy face. "I did not mind it."

"But I do, really! And—and may I please have the ball back again? We were in the middle of a grand game! Oh," as I rise to bring the ball back, "they've gone in—aren't they mean."

"Very mean," I assent; "I wish I could play tennis, instead of them."

"You? Do you ever play tennis?" she says, in an awestruck way; "they all told me you were—oh! frightfully clever, and wrote such deep books and things."

"So that you thought such a terrible person couldn't possibly play tennis?" I ask.

I suppose I seem a veritable Methusaleh to this brown-eyed child, my gray hair and lined face make me look every day of my forty-two years.

"And—and were you writing now—when my ball knocked your hat off?" she asks, in a horrified tone, glancing at my little table.

"Even then," I respond lightly; "but don't please, look so horror-stricken. I'm quite accustomed to these little interruptions from the youngsters. By the way, are you another sister, whom I've never happened to see before?"

"Oh, no!—coloring a little—"I'm Peggy—I mean, Margaret Stanhope, but they always call me Peggy. I'm their first cousin, and I'm here on a visit."

"Indeed! I suppose school has closed for the holidays?"

"School!" she echoes scornfully. "Do you take me for a schoolgirl?"

It is exactly what I do take her for, and I stammer out an apology.

"I beg your pardon. You know I can only see your head and shoulders, and your hair is short and curly—I thought you were a little girl like Rita."

"Rita is fifteen—I"—proudly—"am past nineteen."

"Don't go, please," I say, as I see her preparing to jump down. "I have nobody to talk to me, and I am really very lonely."

"Have you no one belonging to you?—aren't you married?" she asks, innocently.

"No," I return, "I'm not, indeed, and I haven't a relative in the world except a few old aunts. I haven't a soul to speak to except my housekeeper."

"I'm sorry"—turning great brown, pitying eyes on me—"it must be dreadful for you to live by oneself, especially when one is—" she stops suddenly, and colors again.

"Old? Is that it?" I query, amused; "I beg your pardon; how rude I am!" she answers; "and I really don't think you are old. I'm sure you aren't much older than Uncle Tom!"

I feel flattered. Mr. Brew is a stout and pompous gentleman of nearly fifty.

"Rita and Jessie are coming to have tea with me tomorrow," I say; "will you come, too?"

"Oh, I should love to!" she cries; "thank you ever so much, I'll remember. Good-by, Mr——"

"Strong. Maxwell Strong."

"Oh, yes, the children sometimes call you 'Uncle Max.'"

"Yes," I say, "I asked them to."

"I—I suppose you wouldn't care for me to call you uncle—yes?" interrogatively.

"No," I say shortly, with a feeling of annoyance. I do not want to be "uncle" to Miss Peggy Stanhope; hang it all, I am only just forty-two!

"Oh, very well," she says in a rather offended tone; "good-by."

"And you'll come to tea?" I cry after her, and her voice comes back over the wall:

"Oh, yes, I'll come."

And she does; she comes often and often after this, all through this bright, happy summer, and I think the day is dull and gray if no slight, muslin-clad figure comes to chatter to me over the wall,—as she did the first morning.

I do not know how she does it, certainly by no conscious act, but Peggy creeps into my heart and stays there, until I love her as I have never loved any woman before—as all my life. Heavens! how I love her, this little, slender child; how my lonely heart cries out for her, and longs for her, and fears to tell her of my love for her, for she is but a child yet, a little innocent girl; what can she know of love? I like to think of that dear little form flitting about my house, of that bright little face at my table. How happy I would make her, what care I would take of her, my little brown girl! How I would teach that little childish heart to wake up to love for me!

One golden August afternoon I am writing, as usual, in my garden, when Peggy's curly, bright little head appears over the wall.

"They've all gone out," she announces, "and I'm lonely; so may I come and talk to you for a while, or are you too busy?"

"No," I say; "the work can wait."

How I wish I could transfer her, pink frock, brown curls and all, into my room, just as she sits on the top of the wall; and yet I am glad that I could not do her justice there. I would rather keep the sweet girl image in my heart alone.

"Is that a story?" she asks.

NOT THAT YOUNG

"Yes," said the bewitching damsel, "all my sisters married young."
"Married Young?" asked the stranger. "Pardon me, but were you, too, brought up in Utah?"

"Yes, madam."

"A—a love-story?"

"Partly."

"Oh, what is your heroine like?"

"Tall, fair and stately."

"Ah!—regretfully—"I wish I was! No one ever makes their heroines a short, dumpy little thing like me."

"Never mind, Peggy," I say, consolingly; "I'll put you into a story some day, just as you are."

"Will you, really? And will you marry me to an awfully nice hero?"

"Oh, certainly; I'll marry you to a man who adores you!"

"A big man?"

"Yes, very big."

"And dark?"

"Hm—yes."

"And clean-shaven?"

"Decidedly."

"And aged twenty-four?"

"No; aged forty-two."

"What!" she shrieks, "Marry me to an old fogy of forty-two—you couldn't be so mean!"

"Thank you, Peggy," I said, dryly.

It is the first time I have been called an old fogy, and I do not like it. Confound it all, I am not a boy, but—an old fogy!

Peggy is all penitence.

"Oh, I didn't mean you!" she cries, naively. "I never think of you as old, indeed I don't, you are so nice, and kind, and fatherly——"

"Don't, Peggy!" I implore; "spare me that!"

Fatherly! I am nice, and kind, and fatherly! I suppose some of my vexation shows in my face, for Peggy jumps from the wall to my side, and says, humbly, with her little, brown hand on my arm:

"Please don't be cross with me; please don't—I didn't mean to hurt you."

"I'm not cross, Peggy, I couldn't be, dear, with you."

"Ah! but you were vexed," she persists.

"Shall I tell you why, Peggy? Because, when you say things like that, I wonder if you consider twenty odd years make an insurmountable barrier between two people, if you really could not make up your mind to give yourself to an old fogy, who loves you, dear, and would give his whole life to you if you would have him. Can you—would you trust your precious little self into my keeping? I would take such care of you, Peggy." I add, wistfully.

"But I don't love you," she whispers, half lifting her great, brown eyes, and dropping them as they meet the passionate devotion that must be evident in mine.

"I know," I tell her; "but let me teach you, darling, will you?"

"I—I think I will," she murmurs, as I draw her little, slight form into, my arms and kiss her again and again.

"You will soon learn," I say fondly, "when there is no one else, Peggy, was there ever any one else?"

I do not know why I ask that question, but the carnation tide rises in my little girl's brown cheek.

"Yes," she answers, "there was—once." Then, as my arms loosen their hold of her, she cries, "Ah! don't let me go, I'll tell you all about it. It is quite, quite dead now, perhaps you will help me to forget. It was long ago, when I was only eighteen; he was staying with us one summer, and I thought he cared, and I found out he didn't—at least, he went away without saying a word to me."

"The blind fool!" I mutter.

"No, perhaps I was silly and vain. But I loved him so," with a little catch in her breath; "he was so handsome and so nice."

"How old was he, Peggy?"

"He was twenty-three."

I am silent, trying to stifle the mad passion of jealousy that rises up within me. God! that she—she, this little innocent child, should have already loved—and lost!

But Peggy is sobbing and clinging to me, and crying, helplessly:

"Oh, help me to forget him, Max, help me to forget!"

And as I kiss her again, I murmur:

"God helping me, darling, I will."

Summer time has set Peggy in still with her cousins. I think she is happy, and sometimes I dare to hope that she is beginning to love me; but on that dream I do not dwell, for it were too insanely sweet. She seems, at any rate, content, and willing to have our marriage celebrated in the early autumn.

One afternoon late in September I am lying down-and-dull asleep in my garden, when I am roused by voices on the other side of the wall, voices and sobs, and the sobs are like my little girl's!

"Oh, Harry, Harry!" she cries, as I sit up in astonishment, "why didn't you come sooner and tell me this?"

"Because I had no right," answers a strange, masculine voice, "because I couldn't think it honorable to bind you to me, when I had no prospects; and then my uncle died and left me this money, I thought I would come to you, darling, at once, and ask you if you loved me."

"Oh, Harry, I do, I do!" I thought I was forgetting, but I'm not—I love you, I do!"

My breath is coming quick and fast; I feel as if I cannot move.

"Then break off your engagement with this man," he says, "and come to me, darling, and be happy."

I can't, I can't—he is so good, so kind to me. Oh, Harry, it's too late; you must go away, dear old boy, you must go away and forget me."

I have heard enough. Mechanically I drag myself into the house and there, alone, fight the grimmest battle I have ever fought in my life, but come out of it, God helping me, victorious.

The afternoon has worn cool and late when I step out into the next door garden in search of Peggy. She is sitting under the chestnut trees, pale and listless, poor child, but she tries to brighten up when she sees me coming. Brave little soul—she would sacrifice herself for my sake.

I can waste no time in preliminaries. I can but do unflinchingly the task I have set myself.

"Peggy," I say, touching the diamond ring that is the seal of our engagement, "I want you to give me back this, darling, or, rather, to wear it on another finger, where it will have no significance."

She whitens to the lips and asks, "Why?"

"Because," I say steadily, "I have come to the conclusion that my little brown girl is not to waste her life on a man she does not love; and there is one other thing I want you to do—I want you to write tonight to Harry and tell him you are free."

She gazes at me dumbly. "You—heard?" she asks.

I nod. "I couldn't help it, darling, and I am not sorry. Now bid me 'Good-by,' and let me go."

She does not expostulate nor try to hinder me, and I am grateful.

"Say 'Good-by,' Peggy," I repeat mechanically, and she twines her arms round my neck and kisses my lips.

"Good-by. God bless you, dear," she says.

For the last, last time I hold her to me passionately; then I stride away and leave her.

As I shut the Brews' house door a young man passes, evidently on his way to the station, a handsome fellow, who looks at me curiously. Something tells me it is "Harry." At the impulse of the moment I go up to him and say:

"Peggy is waiting for you in the garden."

He stares amazed. "You are the man she is to marry?" he asks.

"The man she was to marry," I correct, and he understands.

I watch him go into the house, and then enter my solitary room. She will be happy, I think, and I am glad, and yet—I would have been so good to her—my little brown-eyed Peggy!

Pointed Paragraphs.

Disinterested enthusiasm is a good thing if a man knows how to work it.

A woman can talk without thinking, but she can't think without talking.

Man is but a freckle on the face of time.

The average man wastes a lot of wind airing his views.

When the frost is on the pumpkin there's dyspepsia in the pie.

The woman who wastes her breath talking never seems in want of any.

Everything comes to him who waits—except the money he loaned a friend.

A whisky still is so called because the moonshiner has to work on the quiet.

A combination of cheerfulness and grit and toadstool judgment is apt to prove fatal.

But few women show discretion in the selection of things to be left unsaid.

A skeptic is a man who doubts his own flesh stories.

Oh, pretty, what a lot of divorces are applied for in thy name!

A dog's bark may be worse than his bite; but give us the bird's song.

An innocent man dreads no eye and fears no tongue.

There's nothing better in this world than unselfishness.

Beer makes some men fat and others lean or against something.

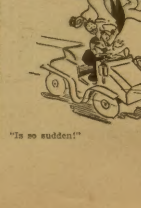
The wise woman caters to a man's stomach instead of to his heart.

It's wonderful how brave the average man is after the battle.

In Leap Year.

Fair Chauffeuse—Will you be mine?

Bachelor Gent—Oh, mademoiselle! This—



"Is so sudden!"

The Current of True Love.

BY HELEN FORREST GRAVES.

"I dare say he has forgotten all about Carrie Fairfield by this time!" said Genevieve Symons, holding her pretty head on one side, to adjust the scarlet rose among its silken black braids.

Alas, for the short memory of man! the brief hour in which gentle glances and words of silver sweet import live! Genevieve Symons was quite right. Mr. Alberti had evidently forgotten Carrie Fairfield's blue eyes, auburn curls, plaintive voice, mouth as he had at one time termed them. But actual presence has much influence in fanning the lambent flame of love, and Genevieve, with her dewy dark eyes, cream-tinted complexion and arch Southern ways, stood ever at his side, while if he chanced to ask a passing question in regard to the other fair young girl, Mrs. Symons answered:

"Well, now that you mention it, it does seem to me that I heard that she was married, or something. Didn't I, Genny, darling? Or else they have moved away."

And Genevieve began to hope that the shy bird was soared at last. Mr. Alberti was certainly growing interested in her after a languid, indifferent fashion—and the charming girl, whose highest idea of human bliss was a rich husband and plenty of money to spend, was already speculating how soon he would reach the much desired point of actual proposal.

"I do really think!" she pondered Genevieve to herself, "he used to be fond of Carrie Fairfield, and I never saw anything to admire in her pale, oval face and commonplace features. Tastes do differ so! And it is very fortunate that she should be out of the way just now, of all times—really quite providential, if one may use the expression."

And Genevieve went smiling downstairs to her worsted work.

On the stairway, however, she caught the sound of Mr. Alberti's voice—her future mother-in-law—who had stopped in the nursery to see her little Christine, the youngest hope of the Symons family, and Genevieve hastened down to join her, all gracious cordiality.

Christine, a plump little girl of five years, sat on the floor in the middle of the room, playing with a huge gray-green parrot, who evinced a brief interest on her shoulder and wrist, uttering hoarse sounds, as if in soliloquy.

"Isn't it pretty, Mrs. Alberti?" said the child, triumphantly holding it up.

Mrs. Alberti looked more closely at the curious creature, which had a peculiarly stupid look, with feathers more than bare neck.

"Why, surely," she exclaimed, "that is Carrie Fairfield's parrot. I never saw another one like it."

"Yes, ma'am; Christine, nodding her little curly head, "it's Carrie's parrot, Zulieka; Carrie gave it to me, Genevieve's last week."

"Last week!" and Mrs. Alberti, with whom Caroline Fairfield had ever been an especial favorite, turned with surprise to Miss Symons. "I did not know she was in town. You were aware of it? And you did not tell us?"

"I—that is—to tell you the truth, it never occurred to me," hesitated Genevieve, turning a rosy crimson, and secretly wishing that her talkative little sister were in Jericho, or some equally distant place. "It only discovered it myself last week."

"She made Sister Genevieve a dress for her," said Christine, pulling the skirt of Genevieve's voluminous silken robe.

"She was a great one," said she, with skilful imitation of charming ingenuousness, "and it gave me pleasure to be able to assist her."

Warm-hearted Mrs. Alberti kissed Genevieve's cheek.

"You are a good girl, my d—" she said. "But you must let me visit her adopted once. Carrie Fairfield in want! Why, I—I—really, when one comes to consider how luxuriously she was brought up. Where does she live? I want to go there immediately!"

Genevieve's placid smile did not fairly express the rage and discomfiture of her heart as she penciled down the desired address on a piece of lavender-colored paper with the initials "G. S." at the top.

"I would accompany you," she said, sweetly, "only my music master comes at twelve, and—"

"Oh, it isn't necessary, I assure you," said Mrs. Alberti; "although I am equally obliged for your kindness!"

No wonder was Genevieve Symons freed from the companionship of Mrs. Alberti, and endured her overcharged politeness by boxing Christine's ears, and frightened the parrot up to the very top of the nursery curtains. Sure that sagacious bird wisely judged it best to remain. Little Christine began to cry and wail piteously.

"I haven't done anything," she whimpered. "You're a mean thing, and I'll tell Mr. Alberti—see if I don't."

"If you don't, I'll put you up in the dark closet under the stairs until the rats eat you up alive," declared the indefatigable sister. "Now hold your tongue, will you? or I'll cut it out for good and all."

Christine was terrified into momentary silence, and Genevieve flounced upstairs.

"There's a resolution," she told herself, as she went; "the old ogress will have her trot for her pains. Carrie Fairfield with a home-work warehouse at this time of day! I am sure of that, or I never would have allowed my lady to go off without me. I have one more day of liberty, and if George Alberto doesn't propose to me during the next twenty-four hours, my powers of fascination are considerably less than I believe they are."

Mrs. Alberti returned in sore disappointment from her fruitless expedition in search of the fair young creature who had once blossomed so radiantly in the yellow glow of life's fairest sunshine.

"Is George in?" was the first question she asked of the servant who opened the door to her.

"No, ma'am; I believe he has just gone to Miss Symons'," was the answer.

Mrs. Alberti sat down and began to fan herself with the hat she had just taken off.

"I am sorry for that," she mused. "He used to admire Carrie, and although Miss Symons is very beautiful and charming—"

And Mrs. Alberti's meditations took no further or more definite shape than this.

Little Christine was sitting on the arch steps, with a covered basket in her lap, that same afternoon, as Mr. Alberti approached the house. She started up.

"Why, Chrissy!" he exclaimed, "what are you doing here?"

"I was waiting for you," answered Christine, slipping her hand confidentially into his.

"For me? And why?"

"I have got Zulieka here," nodded Christine, lifting up the basket, "and I want to take her home."

"And who is Zulieka?"

"Don't you know? Carrie Fairfield's parrot."

"Carrie Fairfield's parrot!

Mr. Alberti started. The little girl as if he thought she were dreaming.

"Yes, very quick before Genevieve she [illegible] for its neck, and she [illegible] me so hard right on the side of my head I don't want Zulieka to have her neck wrung!"

"But where are you going?" demanded the young man, nevertheless allowing himself to be dragged along by the impetuous little girl.

"To Carrie's of course."

"Oh, I know it!

"Oh, I know it often been there with Genevieve, to see Genny, and makes all [illegible]

"But," interposed Mr. Alberti, more and more surprised, "it was only yesterday that Genevieve told me she did not know anything about Carrie Fairfield."

"Genevieve don't always tell the truth!" Christine answered, with a glance half afraid.

Mr. Alberti smiled a little in the midst of his bewilderment.

Christine trotted along, turning corners, leading them by a circuitous route to the [illegible] widow beyond her years, until she reached a forlorn-looking brick house, with a flight of discolored stone steps leading up to it.

"This is the house," said the little girl.

She tapped at a side door, and it was opened by a slender, wearied young girl with deep, violet eyes and half like shiny meshes of pale gold—Caroline Fairfield herself.

"Carrie!" cried Christine, eagerly greeting her, "I've brought back Zulieka!"

But Carrie had neither eyes nor ears for aught but her old lover.

"Mr. Alberti!" she exclaimed, "is it possible that it has come to this

"Yes," said Carrie, quietly. "I am very poor, and I work for my own living, and I have no friends left—not even you—for Genevieve told me that you cared no longer for me, now that I was poor, and an orphan."

"Carrie," burst out the young man, "it is false! I never even knew that you were in the city."

"She has deceived me cruelly, then." Miss Fairfield answered, with a quiver in her lips. "How could she—oh, how could she be so heartless!"

And Carrie wept, weary and worn with toil and [illegible], burst into tears.

"Hush, Carrie—dear Carrie, don't cry," soothed Christine, patting her cheek softly. "Here's Zulieka come back to you again. Genevieve didn't write Zulieka a pretty, feathery neck, shall she?"

"No, that she never shall," Mr. Alberti said in the deep, low tone of suppressed emotion. "Henceforward Zulieka and her mistress shall both be the objects of my care through life. Carrie, my poor, broken-spirited lily, will you lean on me from this moment?"

And Carrie was but too glad to murmur "Yes."

It had been a very sudden courtship; not so much the flame of a new love as the old one blazing up from the long smoldering embers.

And little Christine went home triumphant, and told her mother and Genevieve the story she had just witnessed, taking care, however, to nestle close to the former's sheltering arm.

"He's going to marry her and Zulieka both," asserted the little damsel; "I heard him say so—and it's all your fault, for threatening to wring Zulieka's neck. Won't it be jolly for Carrie Fairfield to be married before you are, after all? I just hope you'll be an old maid always."

And so Miss Genevieve Simons' matrimonial plans were frustrated through such apparently slight agencies as her little sister and Zulieka, the gray-green parrot.

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Slight Misunderstanding.

"I am going to give up painting," said Miss Elderbush, who prided herself on her ability as an amateur artist.

"Indeed!" rejoined Miss Youngver. "What are you going to do—wear a veil all the time?"

Too Particular.

Employment Agent—What was the matter with your last place?

Domestic—The children was too particular. "In what way?

"She wouldn't let me lock th' baby in th' foldin' bed when I had company.

Friendly Boost.

Helen—Tom Huggins asked me last night if I didn't think you would make some man a good wife.

Mabel—And what did you say?

Helen—Oh, I merely said I though you'd be glad of a chance to test your ability to make good.

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The Young Castaways;

OR

MAROONED ON A SAND-KEY.

BY ST. GEORGE RATHBORNE.

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CHAPTER IX.

MODERN BUCCANEERS OF THE CARIBBEAN.

Twice during the last ten minutes had Teddy felt some trifling thing strike him, but being so busy in mind and body he had paid but little attention to the fact; when, however, he received another tap as though something had fallen on his head from above, he was constrained to raise his eyes.

A palmetto tree, young, vigorous and with a bushy top, towered above him, and some slight movement on yonder immediately caught his attention.

His first thought was ridiculous for he pondered if, after all, the island could be inhabited by monkeys, and that one of the tribe was even now amusing himself by preparing the worker below.

Almost immediately Teddy realized the absurdity of such a solution, and then something like the truth began to dawn upon his mind.

Why, of course it was Antonio, who with the nativity of a sailor had found little difficulty in scaling the palmetto, his bare feet acting fairly well in lieu of the customary spurs used by linemen in the telegraph service. And snugly he had lain hidden in the midst of that crown of foliage, while the hot sun had fairly blistered his flesh.

Truly he must have good reason for fearing the captain and crew of the wrecked sponger, to take such trouble in order to avoid a meeting with them.

Teddy was amused in a measure.

"Hello, aloft there! what's the news?" he sang out; whereupon the bunch of leaves parted to disclose Antonio's expressive face, as he made eager gestures as though begging the lad not to betray him.

Perhaps it was a serious matter after all, and Teddy did not wish to see the fellow murdered in cold blood. Besides, if it came to open rupture, and the inhabitants of the sand-key took sides, it might be to their advantage to have Antonio assist in keeping the others in subjection.

So he toned down his voice and held a little conversation with the fellow in the tree top, whereby certain arrangements were discussed, and a code of signals agreed upon, by means of which they could communicate without exciting the suspicions of the sponger.

Antonio reiterated his declaration that the captain was a bad man, who had been guilty of many crimes in the past, and would not hesitate at anything in order to carry out a whim which was rather distressing information to Teddy, who hoped sincerely that the sponger might not take a sudden fancy to make a meal off his companion and himself, or otherwise murder them.

Antonio professed to be fairly comfortable in his airy perch, and at any rate declared it much preferable to being on the ground, at the mercy of the man he had reason to fear. But even to mention of the cause of the enmity between them, nor was Teddy at all curious in the matter, more or less he much preferred Antonio, though at one time he had thought that worthy a tough proposition indeed to tame, yet it seems, changes many of our opinions.

He, the fair prisoner on the boat, occasionally speaking to the man above when the coast was clear.

Once he saw the captain hovering not far away, and fearing lest something might have excited suspicion, perhaps the absence of his voice been heard, he began to troll out a ditty connected with the sea life of such a sailor, and who wandered along the beach each day waiting for the one who did not come, until finally his body was drifted in to her feet, telling the common story of shipwreck, as known to almost every fisherman along the fishing coast.

Captain Da Gama sauntered off, apparently satisfied, and Teddy heard a low laugh above his head, telling that the man who hid up there had witnessed the whole affair and was pleased.

Meanwhile, Maro fished with poor success. Something had seemed to possess the denizens of deep on this one day, for they were most unwilling to the bait, and when noon arrived he had hardly caught sufficient to satisfy the voracious appetites of the five stout chaps who lay around waiting for a sail to heave in sight.

They had begun to help themselves from the scanty stores, and it became evident that in a brief time there would not be an atom of the same left, so that they must depend entirely on what was taken from the sea.

The afternoon proved a little better, so that enough was laid in to do them for supper all around.

In many ways the uncouth men were becoming to be the boys understand that on a lone island in the sea might made right, that education had its limits, and the lack of it did not make a man inferior in the least, in plain language, they began to grow abusive, and even recited their feelings in vile language when something did not exactly suit their lordly ideas of what was proper.

Maro turned white when one of the ruffians first swore at him, but he had had considerable experience among rough characters, and knew how at many times it paid to keep a close tongue, especially when nothing was to be gained by answering back.

It would soo.i go from bad to worse, and perhaps end in a fight, in which the boys could hardly be expected to hold their own, and must suffer the consequences.

They hoped to be able to beat French leave before matters came to this desperate pass.

As the matter of food had now begun to assume an important phase in their existence, and Teddy's stomach closely his had been following them all the while; and between the two they seemed to be reducing the huge monster to a state of helplessness by turning her over and attaching a hawser to a blind whale, and one day being threatened to a tree.

The prospect of steaks and stews was now rosy for a day or two, and then eggs galore had been found, with which to make omelets that would tickle the jaded appetites, weary of fish alone.

On the third day while fishing Maro discovered another bonanza, in the shape of a small bed of that species of oyster that is attached to certain of the coquina rocks where the breakwater hung out, which of course accounted for the presence of that fish in hordes, since its favorite food consisted of animals to be found in the water between its strong jaws.

As long as these held out there was little danger of their starving; but the supply did not seem of any great proportions, and Teddy might have been more alarmed at it the others, lest they soon demolish the treasure, kept it quiet from them, for Maro who agreed with him that it would be wise to keep the secret, for terms they could feast upon the oysters as necessity compelled.

He groaned to think of what they missed in not being able to fry or broil the same, which would have been delightful to his appetite with greater force than fat bivalves roasted in the shell.

He did tell Antonio, however, for it began to look as though the wretched man up in the tree might starve to death at some point if a further supply of provisions were not placed within his reach, so, for little not remained inside the hut.

When Antonio noticed the shelter after such a noble capture of the turtle they found that the next step had been taken, and that there was no loss who took charge as any poor tenant of an Irish landlord. The sponger's stock in trade was used there was no room for the original owners.

So they had to make a way and put up with what they could find.

It did not make them feel any more friendly toward the ungrateful fellow who could thus abuse the confidence of those to whom they owed so much; and the decision ever arose whether the selfish quintette could be left in the lurch, neither Teddy nor his comrade would be apt to feel any qualms of conscience about deserting them.

Had an idea such as that entered a speck beside what was to come.

The men were growing more and more ugly every day, and it was easy to see that the cause lay in their being deprived of their customary tobacco and rum. They were irritable and ready to pick a quarrel on the slightest occasion. Indeed, already there had been several bloody encounters among themselves, and Teddy, who despised their whole breed, was wicked enough to speculate as to what a splendid thing it would be if they should by degrees wipe each other out, until there was only one left, whom they could easily master, with the aid of Antonio, if necessary.

The fishing grounds seemed to know just how far they could go without fatal results, and while dark threats flew around promiscuously, they stopped short of actual murder.

It was a very unpleasant position for our boys, and required considerable care on their part to avoid an open rupture, which, after all, was only delayed, since sooner or later they would be pushed into the breach by some ruffinnly act which could not be avoided.

Teddy believed he had the boat about ready for an emergency, if it came to the worst, though another spell or two would improve its condition considerably.

Together they were applying themselves to the task of laving aside a little stock of provisions, which he had them for a day or so when the time came to launch upon the open sea.

Da Gama had not given over his suspicious watching, but whether he suspected that they were of buried treasure on the island, the locality of which it was his aim to find, or simply a jealousy of that he had some hint of Antonio's presence in the vicinity, Teddy was at a loss to decide.

Another storm swept down upon them, which the boys were not miserable, being deprived of their cabin because the five men filled the hut to its utmost capacity.

It was through one of these that Teddy he communicated to his companion, and passing through the rain to the spot where the little Coot lay they clambered aboard, and found a comfortable interior the shelter they so much desired. Teddy had defied the storm many a time within the same snug craft, though rather "crowded by the mourners," as he jokingly said.

Still, it was much better than they had expected, that they put up cheerfully with the discomfort. Besides, thinking of Antonio, drenched in that tree-top, and swaying violently to and fro with each new sweep of the tempest, rather made them more contented with their lot.

The next day they would have starved, the fish refusing to bite after the storm, only that to avoid trouble with the ugly men in camp Maro was compelled to raid the oyster bed, and bring in a bushel or more of the bivalves for food.

There was riotous gluttony shown during the next meal, and by the time the lazy group had filled themselves the supply had gone down at a tremendous rate.

But Teddy and Maro had at least his fill and feast with the rest, which was about the first thing they could do after the shock of the destruction of the choice bed of oysters.

CHAPTER X.

DIGGING UP THE TREASURE.

Perhaps, had there been unlimited quantities of those delicious oysters, an open rupture would have indefinitely postponed, for the spongers were quite content to feast upon the bivalves, but as fish continued to refuse to be hooked, and there was a dreadful dearth of other victuals, Teddy knew that something must be done, duty it had become to provide for the camp.

And fresh meat would soon follow, for when such unruly souls feel the touch of hunger their worse passions seem aroused.

Maro had kept track of the weather all the time, and considered that he felt him for an hour of their deliverance must be close at hand.

He was a little dubious as to the propriety of venturing forth on this particular night, for the sky was not indistinctly promised

fortune had deposited them on this sand-key at just the right time! Why, they were chuckling in high glee while they lay there peeping over the sand dunes, their eyes almost popping out of their heads in wonder.

It was a peculiar sight, and if those who began to dig with spades had only been attired in more ancient garments, Maro thought he might easily have imagined it to be Kidd and his bold spirits paying a visit to the scene of their lawless labors.

There were just three of the men on the beach.

One was a squatty negro, who seemed to go by the name of Ham, a second an angular individual, evidently a native of some West India island, while the third, the leader, had a twang in his voice that influenced Teddy, who had had experience with the tribe, to mark him down as a pilgrim from the North Carolina coast.

The two men with the spades made the sand fly furiously, spurred on by the hope of a fat reward in case of success.

Da Gama and his followers began to creep carefully toward the spot, and while they did not take so much pains to keep their bodies concealed as before, no one noticed them, all being too much occupied in keeping tab with the work as it progressed.

One of the diggers struck some hard object with his spade, and of course this significant incident brought out a round of delighted exclamations from the trio. Even Da Gama grunted his approval, but the wash of the waves on the beach prevented those who worked from realizing that others were near by, just as much interested as themselves in the results of the raid.

Even the boys admitted feeling more or less enthusiasm as the situation began to reach the critical stage; and who would not, with such conditions prevailing, a chest of treasure being dug up, which doubtless had lain in its snug hiding-place these centuries.

Maro, however, could not but wonder at the shallowness of the cache, and how it came that one of those terrible hurricanes had failed to wash the said chest from so insecure a hiding-place.

He saw the man who directed operations bend suddenly down and seize hold of something, which, with a toss, he landed upon the sand.

It was a box of some sort.

While the distance and the deceptive light prevented Maro from seeing as well as he would have liked, still he was positive that there was nothing about this thing to remind one of those strong, iron-bound chests so often described in fiction as relics of the good old days when pirates abounded in these favorite waters.

But then, perhaps this might represent the spoils of some modern buccaneer, some unfaithful cashier who had fled with all the capital of a bank, a second Boss Tweed, it might even be, and who was content to hide his plunder in a common, every-day soap-box.

Evidently the time had come when Da Gama thought he had better put in a claim for the discovery.

He boldly advanced, accompanied by his followers, and the boys, influenced by curiosity, also walked forward.

The man with the nasal twang appeared to be almost beside himself with delight. His dreams were coming true, and now all that remained to be done was to open the chest and divide the plunder.

"Whar's that 'ere hatchet? Let's rip off the lid and feast our eyes on them sparklers. Don't fergit our compact—to divide among three, and me to git three shares because I got on the track of the thing."

"And whar do we come in, Captain Bravo?" demanded Da Gama, as he led his contingent before the astonished diggers.

CHAPTER XI.

"GOOD-BY," AND HOW-D'YE-DO?"

The sudden appearance of these newcomers on the scene gave Bravo and his two assistants a severe shock, if one could judge from the manner in which they started back, and the exclamations of dismay that burst from their lips.

When, after infinite longing and much hard labor, men have reached the goal of their fondest hopes, it comes hard to hear a rough voice demanding a share in the spoils.

And, naturally enough, Bravo was not inclined to share his find with these impudent interlopers who had not assumed any of the burdens attending its unearthing.

"What in thunder air you a-doin' here, Da Gama?" he exclaimed, as the first natural result of his shock, and at the same time Teddy saw him push in front of the box, as though endeavoring to hide the same from view.

"Same as you—I'm after that pot of gold, and, what's more, we mean to have it, no matter what ye say," declared the other, whom a superiority in the point of numbers made bold. They were five to three, even without the boys.

Bravo thought not, and he said as much, coupling his words with certain strong expressions which he doubtless believed added to the force of his argument. He might be willing to divide the find on reasonable grounds, but it was his discovery, and he stood ready to fight for it if need be.

Hot words began to fly back and forth.

Evidently, the strip of sand was about to witness a little affair pretty much on the same order of those entertainments which have made the name of Kilkenny famous.

Bravo, made reckless by the thought of being actually robbed of his legitimate spoils by the coming of these fellows, struck the first blow, and with such good will that he knocked one of the other side head over heels.

Of course that precipitated matters, and there was a confused jumble of flying arms and legs as the parties became interlocked.

Our boys hardly knew what to do. Most certainly they would not lend a hand to help Da Gama's crowd overcome the strangers, nor did they feel like risking broken heads in taking up cudgels against the followers of the big ruffian who had lorded it over them for some time as ruler of the key.

So they stood still and looked on while the men gouged each other pugnaciously, like so many beasts, all the while grunting and saying various things concerning each other which it would hardly be polite to repeat.

Five against three proved too great odds, and while the man from the North Carolina coast fought long and gallantly, he was outclassed by the giant Spaniard, who at last managed to trip him up, and coolly sat down on his prostrate body.

This seemed to be the recognized signal that the game was over, according to the ethics of the prize-ring; for the other two chaps began to bellow for quarter, and threw themselves also on the sand, thus inviting some of their lusty assailants to a soft seat.

When the participants in the late battle royal had in a measure recovered their breath, Da Gama demanded that the man upon whom he sat should own up beat and promise not to continue the struggle if allowed to regain his feet—to consider him-

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self a prisoner, as it were, without the bonds; all of which he agreed to unconditionally.

Then the subdued trio were allowed to get upon their feet.

They looked very morose, as who would not after having had such a glorious prize snatched out of their very hands.

Da Gama picked up the hatchet.

Vickers and vanquished gathered around the box, eager to discover what manner of treasure lay hidden beneath that cover.

With a vim the captain descended upon it, ripping the lid off with one feil swoop of his tool.

Then there was a groan and cries of wonder.

Da Gama gnashed his teeth, while Bravo had the nerve to actually grin, as though the galling stings of defeat were considerably lessened by the realization that if he did not get anything out of the game there were others in the same boat.

For the affair was a huge sell. Some one had played a trick on the confiding Bravo, knowing how wild he had always been to discover a treasure, and happy to accommodate him.

The soap-box contained the body of a dog, perhaps once a pet on board a yacht cruising in these waters, and which had been duly buried upon its lamentable demise.

The wonder is how they managed to secure in order to lend the proper amount of mystery to the game.

And poor Bravo had organized this expedition for nothing. But he could at least remember the fiendish sensations that had swelled his heart as the box first came into view. It was worth something to have had such an experience.

Da Gama was the maddest of the whole lot.

He seemed to think the joke entirely on him, and that the treasure trove had been cheated out of his lawful prize by the others.

Bravo incautiously laughed out loud, and that was the signal for Da Gama to attack, for, turning upon him, the Spaniard proceeded to bombard the unfortunate fellow with some more.

It resulted in the three men being tied together like a lot of immigrants fresh in from the other side, and afraid of being lost.

Then they were left to themselves.

There was the little sloop anchored just off the shore, and they were free to use the entire party, or would the vindictive Da Gama cause the death of one or two and so away with his little band, leaving the others prisoners there?

It was not capable of doing such a thing, as a means of getting even with Bravo, who he felt had taken advantage of him.

It was, of course, quite unreasonable in the Spaniard, but then who ever knew a furious and disappointed man to listen to reason?

When they saw the five men head toward the boat that was drawn up on the beach, the boys knew what they were making. Their first thought was to run after the others and make a stand, as it could mean escape. It was not only the ugly threats of the men, who, turning, shook their fists at them, that made their running friends pause, but several other things connected with their situation.

In the first place, they had little love for the crowd of evil characters under Da Gama, and it would really be a blessing to feel that they were rid of their company.

Then, again, it seemed cruel to leave Bravo and his luckless companions bound as they were, for they might starve to death, unable to procure food while in this condition.

Last of all was the reflection that they had the little Loon to fall back upon, and this had a strong effect in forcing their decision, for Teddy bore the cedar craft that had carried him over so many hundreds of miles in safety considerable affection, as was only natural with a cruiser of long standing.

Standing there on the strand they saw the five men push off, scramble in the boat and puff for the sloop, upon the deck of which they presently appeared. When the anchor was raised, the sails hauled into place and away they went, sending back taunting farewells over the water which would have given our boys more or less pain only for the fact of the other boat in hand.

They now turned their attention to the waiting little craft, and found Jack Tar in the rope with which they had been bound that their supply of wad seemed in danger of being entirely used up.

The boys soon freed them and listened to a tirade from Vickers, who was fiercely worked up over the theft of his boat, representing as the craft the result of the labor of years at his business of sponging.

He soon learned the truth concerning the presence of the others on the island, and calmed down a little when Maro told him how he could have Da Gama punished as a pirate when he reached Jamaica again.

The situation had changed about, and instead of Da Gama and his vile crew our boys now found that they were marooned in company with a man certain to be their own country at least, even though his style might not exactly suit their ideas of decency.

Could they carry out their design to leave the island on that night? True, the cause for such action had been in part removed by the sudden flight of the other vessel. But they could not say they fancied Bravo very much, while those with him were a tough lot, to judge from appearances.

Yes, it would probably be best to get away while the opportunity held out. Should these men discover the little boat no doubt they would think it a good bit of wisdom to play the same trick Da Gama had carried out, execution, and, seizing the loot, leave the boys in the lurch.

Everything on the key would be left to them, and they should of a surety be able to subsist somehow until rescued, for they were men accustomed to snatching a living from the warm waters that teemed with life.

Surely the boys would send help when they found a harbor, and that would be better than remaining there to share the danger.

Thus it was settled in their minds, and the next part of the program was to slip away from the three men while they were examining the shelter, together with what it contained.

Teddy still held the gun, which he had carried all the while, under the impression that perhaps he might need the same; and if the new settlers many any attempt to hold them he was determined to threaten them with the firearm, which would probably have decided results, since it invited respect.

Of course none of the others suspected a trick, and were so taken up with looking over their new possessions that the boys found it an easy matter to drop out of sight.

Once in the open, they took to their heels and made all haste in the direction of the tree where the boat had been left.

Maro thought he knew the place as well as he did his own name, but rubbed his eyes upon discovering not a sign of the Loon where they had left her.

Could he have become twisted in his bearings and come to the wrong quarter? He was just trying to make himself believe that such a thing could have happened, owing to the unusual state of excitement which surrounded them, when he noticed the chine on the ground, and knew this was the place beyond a doubt.

Then where was the boat?

"Antonio!" exclaimed Maro, aloud.

No answer came.

"The rascal has fled with the Loon!" exclaimed Teddy, almost heart-broken over his loss.

It began to look that way, though the boys still held fast to a grain of hope as they followed the trail left by the boat which being dragged to the beach.

Once there, all doubt was removed, for neither the boat nor the swarthy sponger could be seen, though they looked eagerly out upon the moonlit sea.

Doubtless, alarmed by the sound of fighting, when the rival seekers after treasure had come to blows, Antonio, fond of heart, had thought discretion the better part of valor, and had decamped, leaving his friends, the Spanish lads, worse off than before, since they now had no sign of a boat nor material with which to construct an outfit.

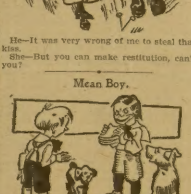
With heavy hearts they turned once more to the shelter under the palmettos, where Bravo and his fellows still poked around to size up their new possessions.

In next week's issue of this paper another installment of this splendid story will appear. Every subscriber to the Ledger is entitled to a free coupon or patterns as advertised on pages thirteen and fifteen.

"Has the Duke proposed to you yet?" "Not yet. His experts haven't finished going over papa's books."

He—It was very wrong of me to steal that kiss.—But you can make restitution, can't you?

Mean Boy.



Willie—Why can't you spare me a piece of your cake?

Sammy—Because it's a shortcake already.

Even a professor of mathematics is seldom able to figure a woman's age correctly.

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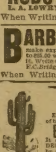

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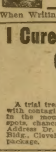

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Architect and Builder.

Father—I want you to learn to help yourself in this world. Every man should be the architect of his own fortune.

Son—Well, governor, I'm started along that line. I've been building air castles ever since I left college.

Had Been Misinformed.

"They tell me," said the English tourist, "that you have female train robbers in this bloomin' country."

"Some one has been stringing you," replied the native American. "All the sleeping-car porters are men."

Every Lady Read This.

Years ago when I was a sufferer, an old nurse told me of a wonderful cure for Leucorrhea, Displacements, Painful Periods, Ulcerlsa and Ovarian troubles. It cured me soon smooth. It is a simple harmless lotion that can be prepared by any one from the recipe. I will send it Free to every suffering sister who writes to me. I have nothing to sell. This is a case of woman helping woman. I send it Free. Address Mrs. A. Reidandsmith Dept. 1404.

Just Once.

Crawman—Are you a good judge of a girl, old man?

Crabshaw—A better judge never lived. In all my experience I was deceived in only one girl.

Crawman—Which one was that?

Crabshaw—The one I married.

Philosophical.

"Are you going to the leap-year party?"

"No. I asked three men and they all had engagements and now I'm going to stay home and save the cost of the ticket and the carriage and the flowers."

"Why don't you ask the fourth man?"

"I'm afraid he might accept."

Asked and Answered.

"What would you do if you had my money?" asked old Grouchley.

"Oh, I suppose I'd hang on to it and be as stingy as you are," replied his wayward nephew.

Money isn't everything. Sometimes credit answers the same purpose.

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The pattern shown below are furnished us by one of the best, if not the best, pattern manufacturers in New York. They comprise the very latest styles and are constructed for accuracy in fit, simplicity in use, and are most economical of material. They vary from the skirts, and are constructed for accuracy in fit, simplicity in use, and are most economical of material. Three months' subscription to the CHICAGO LEDGER 50c cents each. Full instructions are printed on every pattern. Any one sending us 50c cents for three months' subscription to the CHICAGO LEDGER will receive FREE, the months' subscription to the CHICAGO LEDGER 50 cents and FIVE of these patterns FREE. This offer is without equal. If you see wire you will take advantage of it at once.

REMEMBER, to avoid mistakes, you must first give the number of the Pattern wanted—second, do not fail to give bust measure for waist, or waist measure if skirt is desired. Unless you do so here cannot we will not know what to send you. Also, do not fail to mention weapon. PATTERN DEPT., CHICAGO LEDGER, CHICAGO, ILL.

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4695 ETON JACKET 32-40 BUST

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4703 NINE GORED TUCKED SKIRT 22-32 WAIST

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Thirty to thirty-five any local citizen. Neither now or in the future will we ever ask one cent of any one for this Cabinet. It is our free gift to introduce it. Our trial will prove to you its superiority over bath cabinets costing as to-do. We are giving this Cabinet away free to all curable cases to introduce it and the new TRIUMPH METHOD of TREATMENT.

BETTER THAN THE FINEST BATH TUB.

The fumes of all stimulants and all tobacco and the poisonous action of the pores of the skin. The usual tub bath or sponge bath does not clean out of the clothes or germs.

Wonderful Results in Rheumatism, Catarrh, Liver and Kidney Diseases, Rheumatism, Weak Backs, Paralysis, Nervousness, Constipation, Asthma, Headache, Constipation, Piles, Blood and Skin Troubles.

It is marvelous in curing women's ills and sufferings. "Your Free Bill Cabinet is truly cured me after suffering in mind misery for many years." Write for free booklet.

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which equals any sewing machine at any price. We have drop-head, drop-leaf, upright and wing-top styles in high or oak; carved cabinets, all fitted with our famous "Faultless" extra high and extra long arm heads, which possess all desirable features of any high arm machine. OUR FREE SEWING MACHINE CATALOG tells you all about our machines and our system of selling direct to people using our machines, and demonstrates decisively that our machines are the equal of any and all machines, no matter what their name may be. We guarantee our machines for 20 years, ship on easy terms, C. O. D., subject to examination, and allow 30 days' free trial. Write for our free catalog and you should not buy a sewing machine of any description at any price from any one else anywhere before reading our catalog. Write today.

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for the asking without one cent of cost or risk.

This is no deposit scheme; no 30 days trial scheme.

You simply send to your name and address and we send you the belt. We leave it entirely to you to say whether you will or will not accept any money from us. We guarantee it to be the most powerful, positive curative agent of its kind in the world. Even ordinary trials will prove to you the power, a week's wearing of it will restore to you the vitality, the strength and manhood which is your birthright. Many times a day will you thank us and bless the day you sent for it. Many times a day will you thank us and bless the day you sent for it. Many times a day will you thank us and bless the day you sent for it

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Write for our COMPLETE 48-page Carpet catalog at 25c. Tells all about carpets and how to make them look well. Shows hundreds of the latest designs in Brussels, Tapestry, Ingrain and Rag Carpets, Linoleums, Oil Cloths, Mattings, Rugs, Portieres, Lace Curtains, Draperies, Window Shades, Stoves, Ranges, Refrigerators, Baby Carriages, Go-Carts, Lawn Swings, Hammocks, Lamps, Clocks, Silverware, Crockery, Glassware, Kitchen Furniture, Sewing Machines, Etc. Sent free on request. Write for it to-day.
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Send me number of any war. Also Extra Soldiers' Homestead Rights. Write me at once. FRANK H. PEIRCE, Bank Block, Dayton, Ohio.
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Solid Gold Plate Watch, Stem Wind and Set, Hunting Case, Handsomely Engraved, Guaranteed 20 Years. Sent C. O. D. $3.75 and Express Charges. Cut this out and send it or tell your nearest jeweler and express office about it. Write for our Free Catalogue of Watches, Diamonds, Jewelry, Silverware, Etc. Mail orders promptly filled. Established 1882. Capital $500,000. Reference, any Bank or Express Co. in Chicago. CHALMERS & CO., 92-94 Dearborn St., CHICAGO.
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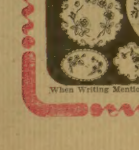

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FOR YOUTHFUL EYES

The Firelight Fairies.

"Oh, I'm so tired of these toys, I hate puzzles. I wish I had something else to play with." Poor little Tom had been in bed with a broken leg for four weeks, and though he tried hard to be patient and happy the days were very long and tiresome.

Suddenly a big coal popped out from the grate, where a glowing fire danced and crackled.

Tom turned his head to see what happened, and imagine his surprise when he heard a little voice say: "Are you all alone, Tom? Then I think I can play and amuse you."

Tom looked again and saw standing on the hump of coal a little old man with a long gray beard and dressed all in scarlet, ending red. "I am glad to see you. Will you tell me who you are?" said Tom.

"I am a fire fairy, and if you like I will call my friends to make your acquaintance. As you can't come to our house we will set and talk to you here." At this moment the grate filled with little dancing fairies dressed in sparkling red and black jet gowns, and following the example of the fairies, even lovelier than the red ones.

"I have seen you all before many times," said Tom, "and now I know who you were. I have watched you for hours and hours and never knew what going on in the fire.

"Yes, this is what all mortals say," answered a dear old gray-haired fairy. "First they see dragons and queer animals in the flames, then faces they love, and as they grow older they see the pictures of their own lives. Often we see tears in their eyes as they sit in the dusk and watch us, but we don't mean to make people sad; we want to make them happy and cheerful and light-hearted. That's why we dance and dance. Look on the opposite wall and see how we dance."

Tom looked while the fire fairies leaped and danced their liveliest to him. They inverted new steps and performed all sorts of antics, until Tom forgot the horrid cast on his leg and laughed again and again.

After a while, one by one, the fairies stopped dancing. Tom cried out, "Oh, don't stop, I do like it so much," but then he thought how selfish that was, for, of course, the fairies must be tired, so he asked them to wait until they caught their breath and then told them what troubles of them when the fire goes out.

"Oh," laughed the fairies, "we are asleep then. We turn gray or white and go sound asleep. What you mortals think are ashes are just sleeping fairies. When we wake up we are all red again. Sometimes, when we go to sleep, we do not wake up so easily and sometimes we stay awake all night.

"You poor fairies! How sorry I am! But I am glad I know you now," said Tom. "Will you promise me, fire fairies, to come and talk to me every evening before the lamps are lighted, and dance for me?"

The fairies promised, and, of course, they kept their words. Tom grew well and strong, and is now a big, busy man. He still loves to see the fire fairies dance at dusk, and even steals away from his friends to be alone with his little friends.

Electric Bell Trick.

A boy has been enjoying himself hugely of late. He has a passion for electricity and, for his age, really knows a lot concerning that power and its uses. The girl "struck," and the young ladies of the family were reduced to the rank of kitchen-maids for the time being.

Now, under the table there is a small bell which you press with your foot to summon the waitress from the kitchen. The boy Johnnie found this out, and determined to give his sisters all the exercise possible. He found that he could connect the wire under the table with the front door bell. This he did.

Last night the family were hardly seated when br-rr-rr! went the door bell. Up jumped one sister and fled to the door. "No one there," she reported. They were just digging the fish when the bell rang again. This time another sister went. No one there.

While pater was carving the roast the door bell rang again.

"Don't go," commanded pater. "It's only some small boy."

Br-r-r-r-r went the bell. Brr-rr-rr!

Pater, by this time was thoroughly exasperated, both with the bell and the roast, and, throwing down his carving-knife and sprang to his feet, saying that he'd fix that youngster if he came once more. But he didn't catch him.

For nearly a week the young scamp had his family thoroughly rattled. People who did come and ring the bell were out of mittes, and went away vowing never to call on the Joneses again.

Finally, some advanced the theory that it was "spirits." That scared mater badly, and she then and there hobbled a note to the landlord, declaring that the house was haunted and that it would be vacated the first of the month.

The agent scurried to the house in double-quick time, and, knowing something of children, said that perhaps Johnnie could explain the disturbance. Johnnie was sent for. He disclaimed any knowledge of the trouble, the agent went through the rooms. When he inquired, did this mysterious ringing take place.

"Always when we are eating," said the eldest sister.

The agent cogitated for a moment, and then, with a sigh of relief, said: "Ah, I have it. The bell is low," and left a note to the dining-room. Moving the table, he discovered the floor bell connection, and explained to the astonished family the cause of it all.

Johnnie did not take his meals from the table for a few days thereafter. He couldn't.

Worse Yet.

"Mamma, why must I take music lessons of Mrs. Reed instead of Mme Evereon?" asked Elisabeth.

"We want to help Mrs. Reed because she lost her husband."

"But, mamma, Miss Rawson never had any husband."

THE LONG-NECKED RACE.

A camel and a tall giraffe
Agreed to run a race,
And sprinted down the thoroughfare,
At an exceeding pace.

The tall giraffe
Said with a laugh:
"My friend, I'll bet a peck
Of gold, I never turn a hair—
And beat you by a neck!"

The camel grinned: "You'd better keep
Your gold upon the shelf;
I'm out for dust—
Now watch me just
Get up and bump myself!"

$19.20 REVOLVING AND RECLINING BARBER CHAIR.

THIS HANDSOME, BEAUTIFULLY UPHOLSTERED, HIGH GRADE, RACHING AND LOUNGING, REVOLVING AND RECLINING, PEDESTAL BASE, HYDRAULIC CHAIR is sent by us for only $32.40. Similar chairs are sold by jobbers at $45.00 to $60.00. Woodwork is the best selected six seasoned quarter sawed oak, finished in the new Empire golden oak, richly carved and floor raised, nickel plated trimmings, leather upholstered, guaranteed. Our New Illustrated Catalogue of Barbers' Supplies, sent free upon request, we show large, handsome illustrations of a complete line of barber chairs as all prices, sold by jobbers and dealers. Our Catalogue illustrates and describes our full line of Barbers' Supplies, Tonics, Hair Goods, Etc., at prices that will absolutely astonish you. Write for it to-day. Mention this paper.
CHALLENGE SUPPLY CO., 92-94 Dearborn St., CHICAGO.

FOR $24.30 our famous Oriental, pedestal, ease lever, reclining and rocking chair, made of solid oak, handsomely carved and finished, nickel plated trimmings, leather upholstered, guaranteed. Our New Illustrated Catalogue of Barbers' Supplies, sent free upon request, we show large, handsome illustrations of a complete line of barber chairs as all prices, sold by jobbers and dealers. Our Catalogue illustrates and describes our full line of Barbers' Supplies, Tonics, Hair Goods, Etc., at prices that will absolutely astonish you. Write for it to-day. Mention this paper.
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FOR ONLY $19.20 we furnish this reclining barber chair of best oak finish, richly decorated and upholstered, roomy, comfortable seat, full length back, quick adjustment, ball bearing, noiseless, easy running, the equal of chairs sold by others at $30.00 to $40.00. Every one guaranteed as represented or money refunded. Our Catalogue of Barbers' Supplies, Tonics, Hair Goods, Etc., at prices that will absolutely astonish you. Write for it to-day. Mention this paper.
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Latest catchy song, words and music. Coin or stamps.
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